

The Oracles of Zeus

Dodona, Olympia, Ammon

H. W. Parke



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DODONA · OLYMPIA · AMMON

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To my Wife

ΣΥΝ ΤΕ ΔΥ' ΕΡΧΟΜΕΝΩ

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I Dodona in Homer	1
II The Oak and the Selloi	20
III The Dove and the Origins of Dodona	34
IV Dodona from Hesiod to Sophocles	46
V Dodona in Later Greek Literature	80
VI Dodona: The Material Remains	94
VII The Responses of Dodona in Literature	129
VIII Olympia	164
IX Ammon	194
X Dodona and Ammon in the Roman Poets	242
Conclusion	253
Appendix I. A Selection of Enquiries made at Dodona	259
Appendix II. Greek Dedications at Dodona	274
Appendix III. The Hyperborean Gifts	279
Index	287

LIST OF PLATES

Between pages 168-9

1 DODONA: entrance to the main sanctuary

This view is taken from the S.E. corner of the building looking south westward along its front. The late porch can be seen projecting from the wall of the 3rd century building. In the background is Mount Tomaros.

2a THE MAIN SANCTUARY: from the North

The view is taken from the hill above the site almost immediately below the circuit wall of the Hellenistic town. The late temple building can be seen projecting into the oblong sacred enclosure. Also the inner colonnade's foundations can be seen on the west and south sides. The east side was probably left open for the sacred oak. Below the sanctuary lies the marshy valley bottom.

2b THE MAIN SANCTUARY: foundations

The view is taken from a point inside the temple building looking eastward. The orthostats in the background are part of the back (north) wall of the 3rd century enclosure. The large foundations in the immediate foreground belong to the earliest (4th century) temple, where the outer wall was met at right angles by the inner wall of the *naos*. Parallel to this foundation, laid with smaller, flatter stones, is the footing of the wall of the later, larger temple (c. 200 B.C.). Meeting it at right angles beyond are the foundations of the inner colonnade (3rd century).

3a OLYMPIA: stadium and the hill of Cronos

This view is taken from the embankment at the starting (west) end of the stadium, looking north at the hill, rising sharply above the Altis.

3b OLYMPIA: from the temple of Zeus

This view is taken from the north east corner of the temple of Zeus, looking north to the temple of Hera whose columns can be seen in the middle distance. This space is now cleared, but in ancient times it held on the left the shrine of Pelops and on the right the great altar of Zeus.

4 HEAD OF AMMON

Louvre, No. 4235. Probably from Dodona. For a discussion, see pp. 208 and 238, note 23. This is reproduced by permission of M. Jean Charbonneaux, Conservateur en chef du Musée du Louvre.

Plate 4 is from a photograph by M. Chugeville: the others from photographs by Mrs. Nancy B. Parke.

PREFACE

This book would not have been written if the author had not been given the opportunity by the Institute for Advanced Study of spending a semester at Princeton in 1960. There I was able to make a start on this subject, working in association with Professor Meritt and Professor Cherniss, and also in the company of my old teacher, Professor Wade-Gery. To all these and others at Princeton who made my stay there enjoyable and useful I am permanently indebted.

Fellow scholars in Dublin have given me ready assistance. My former partner in Delphic researches, Professor Wormell, has read and commented on much of the work. Professor Stanford has supplied some useful references, and colleagues in more distant fields, such as Dr. Webb, Professor of Systematic Botany, and Dr. Grainger, Professor of Zoology, have guided me at times in the literature of their subjects. Mr. Donald Nicol, now of Edinburgh University, but then of University College, Dublin, was of great help in keeping me in touch with publications on Epirus. An even greater debt is due to Professor Hammond of Bristol who allowed me to see and make use of the manuscript of his own work on Epirus, which is due to be published by the Oxford University Press. My obligations to him are also acknowledged in the appropriate footnotes. When the work was nearing completion, two Oxford scholars, W. G. Forrest and John Boardman, read parts and helped me with their criticisms on the presentation.

In Jannina I was able through the kindness of the Ephor of Epirus, S. I. Dakaris, to examine the lead tablets from Dodona, which were shown me in his absence. In Paris Jean Charbonneaux, Conservateur en chef of the Louvre, kindly allowed me to examine and publish a remarkable bronze from his collection.

On turning from Delphi to Dodona, Olympia and Ammon, I am very conscious of the fact that, while the copious sources on

the Pythian Apollo still leave many questions unsolved, the oracles of Zeus frequently suffer from a sheer lack of literary evidence. Excavation at Dodona has helped to fill the gap. A few inscriptions from Olympia add slightly to the knowledge of its priesthood. But Ammon has not been excavated and is as yet scarcely explored. To group the three together in a combined study may even seem rash, as they have only a few links apart from their nominal dedication to one deity. But I hope that readers will find that a separate book devoted to the subject can advance to some small extent our understanding of Apollo's chief rivals.

H. W. PARKE

CHAPTER I

DODONA IN HOMER

The story of the *Iliad* has come to a great turning-point in the action. Yielding to the prayers of Patroclus, Achilles has agreed to send out the Myrmidons under his command against Hector. Homer marks the high significance of this step by the elaborate detail of his description.¹ The Myrmidons are marshalled by Achilles in five detachments, and Homer gives a brief account of each of the five leaders. Then for a moment Achilles leaves the courtyard where the troops are assembled. He returns to his tent to fetch the special cup which only he might use and out of which he was accustomed to pour libations to no other god but Zeus. He washes the cup and washes his hands and fills it with wine. Then he stands in the midst of the courtyard again and utters a prayer.

It is not surprising that, after all this preparation and all the suspense which he has introduced, Homer puts into Achilles' mouth a very special invocation, unique in Greek literature: 'Lord Zeus, of Dodona, Pelasgian, dwelling afar, ruling over hard-wintered Dodona—and around dwell the Selloi your interpreters, of unwashen feet, sleeping on the ground.' It is the first appearance of the oracle of Dodona in a Greek author and the dramatic vigour of the presentation is equalled by its obscurity of meaning. Scarcely a word in the passage but received its annotation in ancient scholarship, and this fact clearly indicates that Greek readers in the classical and Hellenistic periods found these sentences almost as strange and puzzling as the moderns do. They evidently knew no convenient parallels for some of the words, not even in authors since lost, nor did they discover such practices in the contemporary oracle as would supply a satisfactory interpretation. So all they could do in some instances was to work out the probable meaning from the apparent derivations of the words and guess from that to the significance lying behind.

Modern scholars are in much the same position, except in so far as the work of anthropologists has to some extent deepened the

understanding of primitive cults. If like the ancient commentators we take the sentence word by word these are the rather limited results which we get: 'Lord' (ἄνα) is the vocative of the ancient term used in Linear B script for the king, who may in the Mycenaean period have been divine. In Homer this form itself is like Achilles' cup: it is only used in addressing prayers to Zeus. So it strikes at once the proper note of religious solemnity. Some scholiasts did not recognize the form and tried erroneously to combine it with the next adjective into a single word 'Anadodonaean'.² But this only serves to show how strange the expression sounded to later ears.

'Of Dodona': superficially this raises no difficulties. From classical literature and from excavation we know that Zeus was long worshipped at the site in Epirus which the Greeks called 'Dodona' and which is now Tcharacovitsa, eighteen kilometres south-west of Jannina. The ancient commentators noted a minor point of interest: Homer, when writing in his own person, never uses local epithets of the gods. He only puts them into the mouths of his characters when praying.³ His practice when explained in this way need not raise any doubts about the form of the word, but the fact that Homer rarely uses such epithets may have been the ground on which Zenodotus, the earliest Alexandrian editor of Homer, wished to substitute 'Phegonaie' meaning 'of the oak tree' (phegos) or perhaps better 'of the place of the oak tree'.⁴ The importance of the oak at Dodona and in connection with Zeus needs full discussion later,⁵ but it has no business to intrude into this passage in Homer. The local adjective meaning 'of Dodona' is entirely appropriate. It warns us at once that Achilles is not addressing his prayer to Zeus in general or even Zeus in the neighbourhood, and it is picked up effectively by 'dwelling afar' and explained in a typically Homeric way by 'ruling over hard-wintered Dodona'.

The only other difficulty about these local references is that one group of ancient scholars attempted to identify the place not with the Dodona in Epirus, but with a quite different site in Thessaly.⁶ The fact that the first commentator to propose this was himself a Thessalian suggests that the theory had some origin in local patriotism. But it, too, had better be discussed in a later context. Also it may have been linked with this alternative identification of Dodona that Zenodotus replaced the descriptive adjective 'hard-

wintered' by the alternative reading 'many-fountained'.⁷ Of the two possibilities 'hard-wintered' is particularly appropriate from a Greek standpoint to describe Dodona, which is at an altitude of 1600 feet above sea level and exposed to north winds sweeping down the valley. 'Many-fountained' would also be appropriate enough; for Mount Tomaros, the adjoining mountain, was famous in antiquity for its springs. But this adjective is also Homer's conventional epithet for Mount Ida, while 'hard-wintered' is the adjective reserved elsewhere for Dodona in the only other passage where it is mentioned in the *Iliad*. So no modern editor would be likely to remove it from this place.

Of the clauses describing Zeus there remains for comment the one word 'Pelasgian', and this is the most difficult of them all. In classical Greece so far as can be ascertained there was no tribe or country whose members called themselves 'Pelasgi'. Yet tribes of that name appear in various contexts in Homer, and already by the time of Herodotus learned theories were being framed to locate the Pelasgians in various parts of the Greek world and identify them with various surviving peoples, Greek and non-Greek. This scholarly activity was to become a lively pursuit throughout the Hellenistic period, and in modern times it has once more emerged as a fruitful field for theories and controversies. In this passage of the *Iliad* the question could best be seen as having two quite distinct aspects. It would be possible, though not very useful, to discuss what evidence this passage gave for the historic existence of Pelasgians and their location: or, alternatively, one could ask what Homer wanted to convey by the use of the term here, apart from the question whether his use was soundly related to fact or not.

If we try to explain Homer's usage by his references to Pelasgians elsewhere in the *Iliad*, the results remain inconclusive. The Pelasgians dwelling near Larissa appear several times as allies of the Trojans, occurring both in battle and also in the Trojan Catalogue in Book Two.⁸ On general grounds and in particular from their position in the Catalogue it looks as though Homer thought of these Pelasgians as being inhabitants of the European coast of the sea of Marmara, and in the context of Achilles' prayer he clearly did not mean to represent the hero invoking Zeus as the God of Troy's allies. So at best these references to Pelasgians must be ruled out as unhelpful. Again in the *Odyssey* the one reference to Pelasgians is in the famous passage which lists the various races of

Crete,⁹ but it does not seem to have any immediate bearing on the lines of the *Iliad*. There remains the one place in Homer where this exact form of adjective occurs (Pelasgikos)—*Iliad*, Book Two, line 681. It stands in the Catalogue of the Greek ships at the point where the poet turns back from recording the contingents from the Dodecanese and resumes his listing of the mainland forces with the account of Thessaly. The new section is introduced with the line: 'now again as many as inhabited Pelasgian Argos'. In the context the conjunction of proper names is curious. It seems to cover all the Achaeans who come from north of Thermopylae, but there is no parallel for the phrase in this sense in later Greek. In classical times only one district in the north of Thessaly was familiarly known as Pelasgiotis to distinguish it from the other three. But the line in the Catalogue cannot easily be made to refer immediately to it, for the places named in the following section are all from the southernmost part of Thessaly; the area diametrically opposite to Pelasgiotis. Actually T. W. Allen was prepared to make this supposition and identify the Pelasgian plain as the Spercheios valley and suppose that the name shifted in the Dark Ages.¹⁰ Zenodotus here also had produced a drastic alteration in the traditional text of Homer and had read: 'and they who held the Pelasgian Argos, the fatness of the field'. Evidently he wished by emendation to avoid the effect that the line was a general introduction and make it fit into the pattern so that Pelasgian Argos could be taken as a particular district. One may surmise that his authority for this change was the one other passage where the phrase 'Pelasgian Argos' occurs in early Greek verse—the Delphic oracle where 'Pelasgian Argos' is cited as the best soil.¹¹ Obviously that context required a reference to a particular district rather than all Greece north of Thermopylae, which could scarcely be praised in such all-embracing terms. But we have no evidence what district the Pythia had intended. It might have been the Spercheios valley or it might have been the later Pelasgiotis. Similarly we have no evidence in what precise way Zenodotus interpreted the geography of this passage of the Catalogue. Hence the mention of 'Pelasgian Argos' in *Iliad*, 2, 681 does not give much help to explain Achilles' appeal to Zeus of Dodona as Pelasgian. At most it shows that the adjective in the epic could appropriately be applied somehow to Greece north of Thermopylae either as a whole or in some part.

The only reference to Dodona in the Catalogue (its only other occurrence in the *Iliad*) is also strangely puzzling. At the end of what seems to be the gazetteer of Thessaly proper and just before Magnesia there is a vague little paragraph:¹²

‘Gouneus from Kyphos was leading two and twenty ships, and him the Enienes followed and the Perrhaebians, enduring in war, who placed their homes round hard-wintered Dodona, and those who worked the lands round the lovely Titaessos which sends its fairflowing water into the Peneios, nor is it mingled with the silver-eddyding Peneios, but flows on top of it like oil. For it is a fragment of the water of Styx, that dreadful oath.’

The strange information about the river Titaessos serves to fill out a catalogue entry which is notably lacking in identifiable place-names. In fact apart from the river Peneios and Dodona about which we are enquiring, all the other geographical references are very uncertain. Gouneus, the chieftain, does not appear again in the *Iliad*, and Kyphos is never mentioned elsewhere.¹³ The Enienes in historic times were situated in the upper Spercheios valley at the opposite end of Thessaly. The Perrhaebians who are mentioned as living round Dodona were then in the foothills of Olympus north of the Peneios, and many miles from Epirus. The river Titaessos was identified by Strabo,¹⁴ somewhat doubtfully, with the river Europos of his day, a tributary of the Peneios flowing into it from the north near the vale of Tempe. This again would make a suitable unit with the Perrhaebians on Mount Olympus, but does not help us to get any nearer to the historic Dodona.

Roughly speaking three lines of interpretation seem open. If one accepts Strabo's identification of the Titaessos and adheres to the traditional site of Dodona, as Leaf does,¹⁵ one must give up the geography of the Catalogue as fantastic and suppose that the author was patching together scraps of Epic tradition with no knowledge of the true facts. Alternatively, while adhering to Strabo's identification one might try to shift Dodona nearer to the lower Peneios. Some ancient scholars, as we have noticed, alleged that there had been a second, earlier, Dodona in Thessaly. But the site which they offered, near Scotussa, is, as we shall see, not much better to fit the passage in the Catalogue. So Jacoby was probably unwise in taking this way out.¹⁶ The third possibility is to reject Strabo's identification of the Titaessos and suppose instead that it

was a tributary high up the Peneios not far from the Metsovo pass into Epirus. It could, then, be supposed that Gouneus' kingdom lay in the upper valley of the Peneios and that he controlled the country round Dodona on the other side of the watershed. This was T. W. Allen's theory, and it seems the most acceptable of the three.

In comparing the references to Dodona in the sixteenth book of the *Iliad* and the Catalogue we find ourselves faced with a situation not unusual in Homeric research. When the general narrative of the *Iliad* and the Catalogue of Ships are juxtaposed on any subject, they frequently show divergences. The underlying reason is, as probably most scholars would admit, that the Catalogue is in origin a separate document, originally framed for a different context and inserted in our *Iliad* by Homer or another without having modified his general narrative elsewhere to fit with it. So while the Catalogue pictures Dodona as inhabited by Perrhaebians, the narrative of the *Iliad* does not. On the other hand the narrative of the *Iliad* associates the god of Dodona with the Pelasgi, while to the author of the Catalogue they seem to have a vague descriptive connection with northern Greece, but to what extent he would have included Dodona within the term 'Pelasgian' is not at all clear.¹⁷

It is perhaps not to be wondered at, in face of these geographical puzzles, that some ancient commentators on Homer gave up the struggle. It was an old tradition that Homer did not err: if his statements did not appear to agree with literal fact, then they must convey symbolic truth. So each of the apparent proper names could be explained away as descriptive of Zeus by the use of hypothetical derivations. Our first evidence for this treatment of the passage occurs in the great Hellenistic scholar, Apollodorus of Athens. According to him the epithet Dodonaean would be derived from the Greek verb 'to give', and could be interpreted as 'the giver of good things'—an appropriate invocation in a prayer. 'Pelasgian' could be distorted to mean 'near the earth', and 'dwelling afar' was then explained as an allusion to the fact that Zeus lived in the upper heaven.¹⁸ Thus instead of an address to a Zeus worshipped in north-west Greece, it became a spiritual parable of the sort to suit Hellenistic philosophers of religion. This explanation can only be useful to us as a complete demonstration how little later Greek scholars could find in their sources of evidence which could make clear the passage to them. From our discussion of this passage it may be best to suppose that Homer,

when composing the prayer, was employing with deliberate intent materials for a literary purpose which were already old and had probably no contemporary reference. So that the tone of the verses should be lofty and inspire a feeling of special awe appropriate to the critical occasion, he made Achilles invoke Zeus in no ordinary terms, but as the god in a shrine distant in place and hallowed in time-worn phrases. Homer knew of Dodona as the farthest and least accessible of the great oracle-centres of Greece. He associated it, however, with the Thessalians and others north of Thermopylae as somewhere with which they could have contact. Also, as we shall go on to discuss, he had a tradition of strange people with unfamiliar practices managing the worship of Zeus there.¹⁹

These people are referred to by Achilles under the name 'Selloi', or that at least is the reading of our manuscripts. But again we encounter a moot point. The scholiasts record an alternative 'Helloi' and refer to Pindar as using that form, though the majority preferred the form as in our text. It is also the form found in Sophocles and Aristotle, but they cannot be regarded as independent evidence in so far as it is to be supposed that they both ultimately derived their information from the Homeric passage. They only serve to show what was to them the familiar reading. Those who preferred 'Helloi' either derived it from the marshes (Hele) in the neighbourhood of the temple, or from Hellos, the son of Thessalos, the wood-cutter 'to whom they say the first pigeon showed the oracle'. The legend can be discussed later: the existence of an eponym in itself proves nothing about the authenticity of this form rather than 'Selloi'. A further argument in support of 'Helloi' was that Hesiod in the lost epic, the *Eoiai*, referred to the country in which Dodona was situated under the name 'Hellopia' which was then supposed to be derived from these 'Helloi'.²⁰ Those who preferred 'Selloi' do not seem to have quoted an eponym or a derivative. Perhaps they relied mainly on the authority of the transmitted text. But Apollodorus of Athens in the second century B.C. supported the traditional reading by citing the line from the *Catalogue* (*Il.* 2, 659, repeated at 15, 521)—'he had brought her out of Ephyre from the river Selloeis'.²¹ Evidently he identified this Ephyre with a traditional site of that name on the coast of Epirus and found the Selloeis in the near-by Acheron. He could then argue that the Selloeis derived its name from the Selloi and that this was therefore the correct form. But this piece of scholarly

theorizing, however ingenious, is not sound as evidence. The Homeric line about Ephyre and the river Selloeis was a notorious crux to ancient commentators, and the placing of these features in Epirus was little better than guesswork. Also Apollodorus' argument seems to imply an interpretation of the Selloi which is probably wrong. If they gave their name to a river at some distance from Dodona on the other side of Mount Tomaros, they were evidently to be thought of as a tribe inhabiting a considerable area of country, and this seems to have been a moot point in antiquity. Some of the scholia to Homer pointedly indicate that the Selloi are a family (γένος) who supplied the hereditary priests of Zeus.²² That they were a family, not a tribe, seems to be the implication of the following line in which they are described as prophets observing ritual practices which are obviously not supposed to be common to a whole district.

Dodona and its inhabitants are involved in a curious dualism. Homer makes Achilles describe the god of Dodona as 'Pelagic', and it was common for later authors to attribute the foundation of his oracle to the Pelasgians. Yet the name of his priests, the Selloi, with its alternative form 'Helloi', appears to be linked philologically with the 'Hellenes'. The termination in *-enes* for a tribal name is specially typical of north-west Greece. So Dodona is connected with both the opposite racial elements from which Herodotus derived the Greeks of his day—the Pelasgi and the Hellenes. Also if the Selloi are accepted as the ultimate source of the tribe which gave its name to the classical Greeks, it is strange that their most remarkable characteristic for Homer was the possession of two very peculiar customs which he apparently associated with the cult of Zeus.

These cult practices are without parallel elsewhere in classical Greek religion. The prophets have unwashed feet and sleep on the ground. How strange the first feature seemed to later readers can be seen from the various explanations offered with a puzzled air by the commentators. 'Either as barbarians living a coarse and nomadic life they had this practice of not washing the feet because they had not adopted the change from primitive existence. Or doing this in honour of the god; for some people even abstain from bathing and such like care. But certain scholars say that they are of unwashed feet because they do not go out of the sacred precincts and so have no need of ablutions. Andron in his History says they

are so described because they are devoted to war and so used to harden themselves, and Alexander of Pleuron says that the Helloi are a tribe descended from the Tyrrhenians and through an ancestral custom worship Zeus in this way.²³

Of these miscellaneous reasons the references to primitive barbarism were evidently based on a view which we shall discuss further that Dodona was the original oracle of Greece and the home of primitive man. The two scholars cited by name were early Hellenistic writers who identified the Selloi or Helloi as a tribe, and not a priestly family. To Andron the practices were a form of training for combat. Alexander of Pleuron seems to have a more ritual interpretation: his reference to the Tyrrhenians would be very hard for modern scholars to explain, but it appears to imply that he thought he had found some analogy, unknown otherwise, in local Italian practices. The most popular explanation, repeated alone in some scholia, was the belief that 'unwashed feet' meant that they avoided contamination or had no occasion to leave the sacred area and collect dirt. The fact was that the classical Greek found it very difficult to understand how any one could worship a Hellenic god by not washing. Any such suggestion carried with it instead the implication that in some way the ablutions must have proved unnecessary, not that the prophets found virtue in going dirty. Only Alexander of Pleuron and an anonymous reference to 'some people' recognize that the practice could have been observed as a rite 'in honour of the god'.

'Sleeping on the ground' did not invite so much explanation from the scholiasts who do not see any special ritual meaning in it, but modern scholars more rightly feel that this practice also must have had an intention of aiding prophecy.²⁴ Hence an explanation which would fit both pieces of ritual would be preferable, and they usually find it in a wish for special contact with the earth. The prophet slept on the ground and avoided washing off the contact which his bare feet made with it when he was awake. This general notion is plausible enough and will need fuller discussion later. But sometimes it has been carried further and it has been inferred that since the Selloi sought contact with the ground by sleeping directly on it, therefore they did so for the sake of obtaining prophetic dreams. This process of prophecy by incubation is not indicated in any other evidence from Dodona.²⁵ So though it might be unwise to rule out the possibility of any typical form of

divination there, the one word 'sleeping on the ground' must not be regarded as of itself sufficient evidence for incubation. Also elsewhere the form of procedure was quite different. The Homeric passage points to the priests themselves as sleeping on the ground, but, in sanctuaries where dream-oracles were consulted in classical Greece, it was ordinarily the enquirer who slept and it was the priest's duty to arrange for the proper preliminary ritual and to help to interpret the dreams which the enquirer had seen. So while agreeing that the Selloi had probably used practices which strengthened their contact with the earth, we need not press the matter here to further conclusions.

In one other minor point Achilles' prayer deserves comment. The word translated 'prophet' is not quite the normal Greek form. The usual word implied 'forth-teller' of the god's will rather than 'fore-teller' of the future. But here the term employed is even vaguer and more probably indicates an 'interpreter' rather than even a 'forth-teller'. The ancient commentators did not fail to notice a slight difficulty in the expression and paraphrased it with all the usual words for a prophetic diviner, but its implication is rather one who suggests a meaning, and, as we shall see, this may be the appropriate sense in the context.²⁶

Looking back then over the passage—the only reference to the oracle of Dodona in the *Iliad*—the results are rather difficult to assess briefly. Apparently Homer knew of an oracle-centre of Zeus at a place of that name and pictured it as distant, though not inaccessible to those in northern Greece. Its practices were highly peculiar even in his day and were performed by a clan of Selloi who had a strange series of ascetic taboos, and acted as the interpreters of the will of Zeus. The whole subject had an awesome, but unfamiliar, ring which made it particularly appropriate to put into Achilles' mouth at a special climax. But whether in using this material Homer was referring to facts of his own time or facts from the traditional past it is impossible to prove. At least it is most unlikely to have been a fantastic invention and the probabilities seem to weigh in favour of it being traditional rather than contemporary.

When we turn to the *Odyssey* the picture changes considerably and simplifies at the same time. This contrast with the *Iliad* may be accidental, or it may be connected with some distinction between the two poems resulting from the *Odyssey* being a production of

later date. But the most plausible explanation in this particular instance is the different function which Dodona is made to play in each epic. In the *Iliad* it was a distant mysterious place not closely concerned with the action, but invoked to create a feeling of peculiar awe. In the *Odyssey* though it is never actually made the scene of Odysseus' travels it is treated as near enough to Ithaca and a place which gives reality to the story. The same passage of four lines in a typical Homeric fashion is twice used to describe an invented visit of Odysseus to the oracle. For instance, Odysseus in the feigned character of a Cretan stranger tells Eumaeus, the swineherd, that he has been at the court of Thesprotia, where the king has informed him that: 'Odysseus was going to Dodona, so that from the god's high-foliaged oak tree he might hear the will of Zeus on the question how he should return to the rich land of Ithaca, now that he had been absent long: whether to return openly or secretly.'²⁷ The story told to Eumaeus is a fabrication, but the whole purpose of the telling is to make it convincing. So Homer must have thought that this would sound like a possible and even probable thing for a hero of the Trojan war to do. In fact it suggests the picture of a typical enquiry at the oracle of Dodona by alternative question, to which the oracle was expected to reply with one or other answer: either 'openly' or 'secretly'.

Compared with the *Iliad* the passage is free from a number of difficulties. First of all there is no major geographical problem. No ancient or modern scholar doubted that this was the Dodona in Epirus in the same position as in historic times. Those who supposed that the Dodona of the *Iliad* was in Thessaly actually drew a distinction between the two poems, and said that the Dodona for the *Odyssey* was on the familiar site.²⁸ On a point of detail, scholars, both ancient and modern, have often been led to suppose that Dodona was at this period included in the kingdom of Thesprotia.²⁹ This would be a possible, but not necessary, reading of the passage. Evidently Odysseus was imagined to have gone to Dodona by way of the court of Thesprotia, and in any event this is likely, because Thesprotia in historic times covered the coastal plain and mountains facing the Adriatic opposite Corcyra. At that period also the inland plateau behind, though sometimes loosely included in Thesprotia, actually formed the kingdom of the Molossi. So though both in antiquity and in modern times this passage in the *Odyssey* has been used to support

a theory that in the epic period the Thesprotians had occupied the interior of Epirus, it is an unnecessary hypothesis.

In another respect there is a striking difference between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In the *Iliad* the implication that Dodona was an oracle-centre was simply contained in the one word 'interpreters' (hypophetai). The main emphasis of the passage fell on the peculiar practices of the Selloi without any explanation how they were connected with the functioning of the oracle, and this was quite appropriate to the poet's purpose. In the *Odyssey* instead the emphasis is on the enquirer. The priests are never named. Whether they still left their feet unwashed and slept on the ground is not taken into account. But a new and remarkable feature is recorded. Odysseus was to hear the will of Zeus from the high-foliaged oak of the god. No mediation by priests is even mentioned, but we need not suppose that Homer imagined the oracle as functioning without them. However, the oak tree here mentioned for the first time in a Greek author was to appear again constantly in connection with Dodona throughout the rest of classical literature.

The *Iliad* had contained no mention of an oak tree at Dodona. But the notion of a tree sacred to a god or goddess would not have been inappropriate in that poem. Trees are mentioned there in connection with sanctuaries, and in particular there was on the plain of Troy an oak sacred to Zeus which recurs again and again in the narrative as a landmark. It appears to be situated near the Scaean gate for these two features are mentioned together three times in one stock line-ending. But so far as the *Iliad* goes, there is no passage in it to suggest that this tree sacred to Zeus was the scene of acts of worship or was situated in a sanctuary. Sarpedon's companions when he is fainting from a wound carry him and lay him under it with no suggestion that the tree was fenced in or subject to any ritual restrictions such as would make it unsuitable as the place to lay a wounded and possibly dying hero. So while recognizing that in the *Iliad* an oak could be sacred to Zeus, it is not possible to define what that meant in practical observance, and certainly there is nothing to suggest that the Trojan tree was prophetic. Only one feature, perhaps, may connect with the later practices at Dodona. When Athena and Apollo are consulting about the fortune of the war they disguise themselves as vultures and perch on the branches of Zeus's tree. One may wonder

whether birds that perched on a sacred tree were specially ominous. But the question remains unanswered.³⁰

In the context in the *Odyssey* where the oracle of Dodona is mentioned it appears to be implied that the will of Zeus was audible from the oak tree itself. There is nothing to indicate that the oracle was originally conveyed by the tree through other sounds such as the creaking of its trunk or the rustling of its leaves. Still less can the *Odyssey* be taken to imply that the oracles really came from birds associated with the tree giving oracular indications by their call or their flight. This picture of the 'talking oak' is a favourite one with later poets, and in case any doubts occur over the application of this classical evidence to epic periods, we have confirmation from a story which evidently went back to the time of Homer and even earlier. Athena when the Argo was built took a timber from the oak tree of Dodona and fitted it into the keel. This had the result that the Argo itself could speak and guide or warn the Argonauts at critical moments, as it actually is represented as doing in our extant epics on the subject. The original epic is lost, but there is no reason to doubt that this miraculous feature went back to it, and, if so, was at least as old as the *Odyssey* in which the Argo and its story are mentioned. Our earliest extant allusion to the talking ship's timber itself is found elsewhere, in a fragment of a lost play of Aeschylus. But it is there mentioned in a manner which shows that it was already a familiar feature of the tradition, and there is an obvious element of primitive folk-tale in the conception of a ship which addresses its sailors in times of emergency. Also the derivation of the timber from Dodona exactly confirms the picture of the oak's action. If the oracle had been imagined as coming from outside the tree, from the birds in its branches, for instance, it would make little sense to build its timber into a ship and hope for prophecy. But if the tree spoke itself, then its timber might do so also. This analogy does not perhaps exclude the likelihood that to the ordinary ear the voice of the oak was heard as rustles of leaves or creaks of branches. For the timbers of the Argo, too, might have groaned under the strain of wind and waves. But to the epic poet it was indeed the voice of Zeus speaking in words and perhaps to prophets who cultivated a faith strengthened by asceticism the tree may in mystical experience have seemed to be as truly vocal.³¹

The part of Dodona in the story of the Argonauts is worth

emphasizing from another angle, for it provides the first illustration of a motive which emerges again and again in the history of Dodona—the rivalry of the Delphic oracle. Two of the extant epics on the subject of the Argonauts—by Apollonius of Rhodes and Valerius Flaccus—both include a number of references to the Pythian Apollo which imply that Jason consulted that oracle before his expedition. But no prophecies of the Pythia are represented as exercising any determining influence on the course of the Argo. In fact it is evident that the connection of Delphi with the story is superficial and probably was introduced at some late stage.³² On the other hand the link with Dodona is of a very primitive character and concerns the ship itself—the core of the legend. Evidently in its early form the ship was endowed with a voice through having a timber from the speaking oak in its keel, and so was enabled to give utterance three times at least—when first launched, when its original helmsman had died and a new one had to be chosen, and when it had reached the farthest and most perilous part of its voyage. This is all part of the basic legend of the first ship to sail the seas, and also it presupposes the recognition of Dodona with its speaking oak as the great source of divine guidance. Such a view would be, as we have seen, highly appropriate to Thessaly, the district which seems to have been the home of the legend of the Argonauts. But in archaic Greece the relationships were different. Thessaly at some date probably soon after 700 B.C. had extended its power southward until the religious federation originally centred at the sanctuary of Demeter of Anthela near Thermopylae became the international body with a spiritual control of the Pythian sanctuary. Also Thessaly had the primacy in this Amphictyony and through its subordinate tribes was strongly represented. It was not surprising that in these circumstances an epic which had originally been Thessalian and connected with Dodona became more Pan-Hellenic and tended to give room for mention of Delphi, the great oracular centre of Archaic Greece.

A similar dualism may be seen at another point in the *Argonautica*. It is traditional in the extant accounts for the heroes to include in their number two prophets—Mopsus and Idmon—a rather excessive complement for a ship that could itself prophesy in emergencies. Of the two Mopsus is definitely connected with Dodona. His birth is traditionally associated with the river Titaresos which was, as we have seen, grouped with Dodona in the

Homeric Catalogue. Also his special skill in divination was concerned with birds. He could understand their language, and this, as we shall see, was an accomplishment particularly appropriate to a prophet from that sanctuary.³³ Idmon, on the other hand, is prominently mentioned as a son of Apollo, and is particularly associated with him in divination.³⁴ From fragmentary allusions one can gather that he also played a conspicuous part in some of the lost Corinthian epics, such as the *Naupactia*, while this Mopsus does not appear elsewhere, though a namesake of his, represented as later in date, was of great importance in the foundation-legends of several oracle-centres in Asia Minor.

It looks as though originally the *Argonautica* contained a ship with a prophetic timber from Dodona and a prophet from the same sanctuary who could conveniently use his gifts of divination when the action took place on land. But just as Delphi superfluously and superficially was introduced into the later versions of the story, so also an Apolline prophet from farther south came in to join Mopsus. Our extant versions do not exhibit the distinction between the two clearly. At times they are definitely contrasted; at others grouped together, or even confused to the extent that once Mopsus, though from Dodona, is described as taught by Apollo, and even in one ancient authority becomes his son, like Idmon. But these contaminations of legend were inevitable in later authors writing at a time when Apolline divination was dominant in Greek tradition and the rivalry between Dodona and Delphi had finally been decided in favour of the latter.

There remains one further passage in the *Odyssey* to be discussed because it may perhaps contain another reference to the oracle at Dodona. The scene is once more on Ithaca and the suitors of Penelope are discussing the plot to kill Telemachus; Amphinomus says: 'But first let us ask the will of the gods if the judgements of mighty Zeus approve, and I myself will slay him'.³⁵ The deliberate consultation of an oracle on the subject seems to be intended. But though Dodona would be, as we have seen, geographically appropriate to Ithaca, it would be rash on this reading of the text to assert that it alone was meant. However, Strabo knew of a quite different reading 'if the Tomouroi of mighty Zeus approve'. It was explained that the priests of Zeus at Dodona were called the Tomouroi after the neighbouring mountain, Tomaros. The mountain is well known from other references in ancient literature: the

title for the prophets seems only to occur in this one citation. Strabo, following no doubt one of the Alexandrian commentators, explained that 'Tomouroi' was a contracted form for 'Tomarouroi'—the wardens of Tomaros—and this is etymologically quite possible. Our ancient manuscripts, however, and our modern editors alike have been too cautious to introduce this strange reading into the text. It might be defended on the principle of *difficilior lectio*, and Strabo had a further argument against the more usual reading: that the word used here for 'judgements' (*themistes*) in no other passage in Homer was employed with the meaning of 'oracles', but only of 'laws'. However, the balance of probability is still against 'Tomouroi'. But two points can be deduced from this alternative reading, even if it is rejected: that to some ancient scholars at least a reference to Dodona seemed to be intended, and that 'Tomouroi' was a possible title of the priests there. For it is most unlikely that the word was produced by corruption or fantasy and then explained in this way without any basis in fact.

If the title is authentic it may be regarded as evidence that Zeus in early times was thought of, not merely as the god of a sacred tree at Dodona, but also as the god of the highest neighbouring mountain. The two aspects suggest the fusion of two quite different ideas of the supreme god. The god of the oak tree, as we shall see, has northern connections, while the god of the mountain-top is a typical Mediterranean deity.

NOTES

¹ *Il.* 16, 220 ff.

² Sch. B. rec. and Sch. T. *Il.* 16, 233, and some late mss. cited in the *OCT* apparatus criticus. Cf. M. van der Valk, *Researches*, I, p. 339, note 135, that the allegorical explanation originally went back to the Stoics; cf. Plu. 31c. Cf. also Apollodoros, *F.Gr. Hist.* 244 f. 88.

³ Sch. B. rec. loc. cit., giving as examples Chryses, *Il.* 1, 39 (addressing Apollo as Smintheus) and Pandarus, *Il.* 4, 101 and 119 (addressing Apollo as Lycogenes). The exception appears to be *Il.* 20, 404. 'Ελικώνιον . . . ἄνακτα of Poseidon in a simile. Cf. also St. Byz. s.v. Δωδώνη.

⁴ St. Byz. l.c. Φηγών = oak-grove is cited in L.S. from the Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum.

⁵ Cf. *infra*, p. 11 ff. and 20 ff.

⁶ Suidas of Thessaly, *F.Gr. Hist.* 602 f. 11 and Cineas of Thessaly, *F.Gr. Hist.* 603 f. 2 with the commentary. This Thessalian hypothesis was linked with the further variant reading—Δωδωναίε—supposed to be derived from the name of a town in Thessaly. But there is no independent evidence for this place-name. Cf. van der Valk, op. cit., pp. 336 ff., that the Sch. B. and T. go

back to a commentary by Epaphroditus (first century A.D.) who accepted the Thessalian location. See further p. 38 ff.

⁷ Sch. T. *Il.* 16, 234. For the 'hundred springs' of Mount Tomaros, cf. Theopompus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 115 f. 319. But for 'hard-wintered', cf. *Il.* 2, 750.

⁸ *Il.* 10, 429 and 17, 288 as allies. For the Catalogue, *Il.* 2, 840 ff.

⁹ *Od.* 19, 177.

¹⁰ T. W. Allen, *The Homeric Catalogue of Ships*, 108 ff.

¹¹ Parke and Wormell, *Delphic Oracle*, II, no. 1.

¹² *Il.* 2, 748 ff. I agree with T. W. Allen, op. cit., p. 137, in following Bentley and accepting the form Titaressos in defiance of Wernicke's law.

¹³ Lycophron, 897, mentions the death at sea of 'the chief of the Cyphaeans', evidently referring to Gouneus. But this is a mere display of erudition. The scholiasts and glossators add nothing.

¹⁴ Str. 9, 5, 20, cf. 7, 7, 8 and fr. 15. See Stählin, P.W. s.v. Titaressios, who accepts the location in the classical Perrhaebia without discussing the Homeric crux.

¹⁵ W. Leaf in his commentary on *Il.* 2, 748 and cf. also his remarks in *Homer and History*, 136-7.

¹⁶ F. Jacoby in his commentary on Apollodorus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 244 f. 189 (St. Byz. s.v. Δωδώνη).

¹⁷ For a recent discussion, see D. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad*, chapter 4.

¹⁸ Apollodorus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 244 f. 88 (St. Byz. s.v. Δωδώνη) and Sch. B.T. with more and somewhat different interpretations.

¹⁹ When I discussed this view with H. T. Wade-Gery, he at first doubted Homer's use of obscure proper names with an emotive purpose, but later suggested εἰν Ἀρίμοις (*Il.* 2, 783) as another instance.

²⁰ Pindar, *fr.* 259 (Bowra) = Str. 7, 7, 10; *EM*, 709, 36; Sch. A, *Il.* 16, 234 and Eust. *Il.* 1057, 57; also without a reference to Pindar in Sch. T, *Il.* 16, 235. Selloi, S. Tr. 1167; Eur. *fr.* 367; Arist. *Met.* 572 a 41. Hellopia, Hes. *fr.* 134, 1.

²¹ Apollodorus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 244 f. 181 and 198.

²² γένος Sch. B.T. *Il.* ἔθνος, Alexander of Pleuron ap Sch. A. *Il.*

²³ Sch. A, *Il.* 16, 235, Andron, *F.Gr. Hist.* 10 f. 4 and f. 16 b, showing that he probably connected Dodona with a migration of the Pelasgi to Tyrrenia.

²⁴ For the view that the practices were a form of *askesis*, see e.g. O. Kern, P.W. s.v. Dodona (Vol. 5, col. 1269) and *Religion der Griechen*, I, 181 ff.

For the contrary view that they were merely features of primitive barbarism, M. Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I², 427, and N. G. L. Hammond, *Epirus*, 372. Most scholars would probably agree that Homer implies in the context some connection between the practices mentioned and the worship of Zeus, and must not be supposed to have inserted these epithets as a general description of the cultural characteristics of the Selloi.

²⁵ For incubation at Dodona our only ancient evidence is Eust. *Il.* 1057, 61, referring to Lycophron, 223. There the word τρύφουσι is used with a general meaning of prophet and is followed by a mention of prophecy by dreams. But it is clear in the context that there is no connection between the two sentences such as would imply an association of a prophet of Dodona with oneiromancy. Eustathius or his source appears to be embroidering on a misinterpretation of Lycophron. Hence Bouché-Leclercq, II, 295, is not justified in asserting that

Lycophron gave evidence of incubation at Dodona. The practice there is denied by Kern, P. W., l.c. Those who believe in incubation at Dodona connect it, somewhat paradoxically, with Dione as an earth-goddess, though the only basis for the hypothesis is ultimately this passage describing the prophets of Zeus.

²⁶ Sch. A, *Il.* 16, 235; Hsch. s.v. ὑποφῆται..

²⁷ *Od.* 14, 327 ff. The lines are repeated at 19, 296 ff.

²⁸ E.g. Sch. *Od.* 14, 327, and Jacoby in his commentary on Apollodorus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 244 f. 189 seems to incline to this view.

²⁹ See Cross, *Epirus*, 5 ff.

³⁰ The line-ending—Σκαίας τε πύλας καὶ φηγὸν ἴκανε, *Il.* 6, 237 and 9, 353, ἴκοντο, 11, 170. The same tree is mentioned at 21, 549. In none of these passages is it associated with Zeus. In 5, 693 the wounded Sarpedon is laid ὑπ' αἰγινόχοιο Διὸς περικαλλεῖ φηγῷ. In 7, 20 Athena and Apollo meet παρὰ φηγῷ, apparently at the Skaian gate, and in 7, 60 they perch φηγῷ ἐφ' ὑψηλῇ πατρὸς Διὸς αἰγινόχοιο. Leaf doubts whether the oak in book 5 is the same as the others, and argues that all oaks were sacred to Zeus.

³¹ The Argo in Homer, *Od.* 12, 70. The earliest reference to the beam, Aeschylus, fr. 20 = Philo Judaeus, 2, 468, where it seems to imply that the Argo spoke to prevent slaves coming aboard: not otherwise in extant literature. The normal occasions are: (1) at the departure from Thessaly, A.R. 1, 525, Orph. A, 263; (2) at the climax of the voyage, A.R. 4, 580 (a storm in the Adriatic), Orph. A. 1160 (when near the world of the dead). Both later passages are motivated by the blood-guilt of Absyrtus. In Valerius Flaccus the beam speaks to Jason in a dream (1, 302) and after the death of the helmsman, Tiphys (5, 65). The motive of the beam does not appear in Pindar's fourth Pythian ode, but occurs also in Apollodorus, 1, 9, 16 and 1, 9, 19 = Pherecydides, *F.Gr. Hist.* 3 f. 111a (where the Argo refuses to take on Heracles at the beginning of the voyage because of his weight, cf. Ar. *Pol.*, 3, 1284 a 22). Cf. also Claudian, *de bello Gothico* (26), 18.

³² Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 309.

³³ Mopsus: earliest reference, in a list of Lapiths—Μόψον τ' Ἀμπυκίδην, Τιταρήσιον, ὄζον Ἄρηος (Hes. *Sc.* 181). In spite of Allen's doubts (*Homeric Catalogue*, 136), the adjective Τιταρήσιος is no doubt local and not patronymic. It recurs in A.R. 1, 65. Lycophron, 881, has Τιταρῶνιον (explained by the Scholiast as grandson of Τιταρῶν). The Orphic *Argonautica*, 128, gives an even closer connection with Dodona:

Καὶ Μόψον Τιταρῆθεν ὃν Ἀμπυκι νυμφευθεῖσα
Χαονίην ὑπὸ φηγὸν Ἀργονίς ἐξελόχευσε.

It would be interesting if it could be proved, as it is possible, that this tradition went back to an early source. Hyginus, *Fab.* 14 and Sch. A.R. 1, 65 name his mother, Chloris (perhaps identified with the daughter of Teiresias). He is represented as present in all the typical legendary actions—the centauromachy, the Calydnian hunt, the funeral games of Pelias. So Carl Robert (*Heldensage*, 3, 776) suggests that he only derived his prophetic side from assimilation with his namesake, the grandson of Teiresias and under Milesian influence. Our earliest reference to him as an Argonaut emphasizes his prophetic powers—μάντις ὀρνίχεςσι καὶ κλάροισι θεοπροπέων ἱεροῖς (Pi. *P.* 4, 190). Cf. A.R. 1, 65

ὄν περὶ πάντων Λητοίδης ἐδίδασκε θεοπροπίας οἰωνῶν, which I would explain as a typical example of the later intrusion of Apollo into a prophetic context. For his understanding the language of birds, e.g. A.R. 3, 930 ff. His name is non-Greek, appears to occur in a Linear B tablet from Cnossos, and in the case of his namesake of the Trojan war period is evidenced as early as the late eighth century by the Karatepe inscription (George Huxley, *Crete and the Luwians*, Oxford, 1961, 47 ff.). Strabo, 9, 5, 22, connects the town of Mopsion in the Pelasgic plain with the Argonaut, and this is confirmed as early as the fourth century B.C. by its coins. Later writers, e.g. Ammianus, 14, 8, 3, could confuse the namesakes.

³⁴ Idmon was among the Argonauts as early as Eumelus of Corinth, fr. 9 (Kinkel) and also in the *Naupactia*, fr 6–8. He is a son of Apollo, Pherecydes, *F.Gr. Hist.* 3 f. 108 and A.R. 1, 139, where his mortal father is nominally Abas, the son of Melampus, thus linking him with the famous line of the Peloponnesian prophets. Cf. *infra*, p. 165 ff. He was identified with the hero who received cult under the name of Agamestor at Heraclea in Pontus (Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, 1, 62).

³⁵ Hom. *Il.* 16, 402 ff; Str. 7, 7, 11.

CHAPTER II

THE OAK AND THE SELLOI

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* show somewhat different pictures of the oracle at Dodona, but their brief references need not be taken as contradictory to each other. They can be treated as complementary. At this distant site in north-west Greece a priesthood with peculiar ritual observances acted as interpreters of an oak sacred to Zeus which spoke his prophecies. Their practices of unwashed feet and sleeping on the ground seemed strange and hard to explain for those who commented on the Homeric description in later ages. But the sacred oak must have been almost equally peculiar. The rediscovery of the Minoan civilization of Crete and the Mycenaean civilization of the mainland has brought to light many representations, particularly on engraved seals and gems, which indicate the existence of some form of tree-cult in the pre-Hellenic period, but there is nothing in them to suggest the oracular consultation of a sacred tree. The general impression is of a form of orgiastic worship such as finds its nearest analogies in Asiatic religions. It is not surprising, however, if the oak of Dodona has no source in this direction. For all the archaeological evidence so far available suggests that Epirus was scarcely touched by Minoan and Mycenaean culture.¹

But it is also true that neither had the sacred tree of Dodona any obvious analogies elsewhere in classical Greece. We have seen how in the *Iliad* there was an oak tree of Zeus on the plain of Troy, but nothing in the poem suggests an actual cult at the site, still less an oracle. Oaks in general may have been recognized as the trees of Zeus, just as laurels were associated with Apollo; and an obscure phrase in the Hymn to Apollo may indicate that once his oracles at Delphi came 'from the laurel tree', whatever that may mean. But if so, prophecy in that form had ceased there before historic periods.² There were no prophetic trees in classical Greece, except the oak of Dodona, and even the oak tree did not figure much elsewhere in the cult of Zeus. Appropriately enough the only other

place besides Dodona where it is mentioned in our evidence was in Arcadia, a notoriously primitive area. There in the cult and legends of Zeus Lycaios the oak tree has a minor place. It was locally believed that those who were to become werewolves under the influence of the god took off their clothes and hung them on an oak beside a lake before undergoing the transformation. Also the priest of Zeus used to employ a branch taken from that species of tree when practising a form of magic to induce rain.³ These examples confirm the general picture that the oak tree was appropriate to Zeus, but do not provide any ground for regarding the cult of Dodona as closely linked to the general pattern of Hellenic religion.

It would be easier to find analogies in Italy. There the oak was the sacred tree of Juppiter, and is frequently mentioned in this connection. For instance Romulus when he first won the *spolia opima* hung them on a frame made of oak timber and deposited them as a dedication at the foot of an oak tree sacred to Juppiter on the Capitol.⁴ The trees of Italy were both capable of speaking and of being spoken to. Pliny the Elder when discussing omens derived from trees excuses himself on the ground that it is a boundless subject, but refers among Roman sources to the records of Gaius Epidius which he says included cases of trees that talked. He does not refer to similar examples from Greek records. Without the works of Epidius, which are lost, it is difficult to conjecture further, but one may add that the implication in Pliny's discussion is that the trees had spoken as remarkable and isolated prodigies, not that as at Dodona there had been one tree which could be regularly consulted.⁵

For one instance of an oak tree which was spoken to, we may take the charming episode in Livy who describes how in 468 B.C. the Aequi under Clodius Gracchus broke the treaty which they had made the previous year and invaded Latium as far as the Mons Algidus. There three Roman ambassadors came to the camp 'to complain of the injustice and demand restitution in accordance with the treaty. The commander of the Aequi bade them speak to an oak tree the instructions which they had received from the Roman senate, while he in the meantime was otherwise engaged. The oak, a huge tree, was towering above the general's tent and there was a sheltered seat in its shadow. Then one of the ambassadors as he was going away, said: "May both this consecrated oak

and any gods there be hear that the treaty has been broken by you and may they attend now to our complaints and later to our weapons when we avenge the rights of both gods and men which have alike been outraged".⁶ This striking invocation was followed by an appropriate victory of the Romans over the presumptuous Aequi.

Livy, while using his typical charm of narrative, seems scarcely to have grasped the inner meaning of his story. He either failed fully to recognize or did not care to stress that the Aequian commander had begun by pitching his tent in the shadow of a sacred oak and that when he told the Roman ambassadors contemptuously to tell their tale to a tree because he was otherwise engaged, he was in effect challenging them to invoke this god whose presence in the tree was to be presupposed. Possibly in the original version of the legend the invading Aequian was unaware of the iniquity which he was committing and was led blindly to invite the ambassadors to address the tree. This would be an instance of the favourite motive of moral tales that the gods first drive mad those whom they are about to destroy. If so, however, the corresponding feature should be that the Roman knew and recognized the special nature of the tree, while in Livy's tale he seems to act at random and does not identify by name the deity whom he addresses. At the same time the story in this late annalist version is at least evidence for a primitive Roman belief in the presence of a deity in a tree and the possibility of addressing him, though neither the species of tree nor the deity is given a name in Livy's narrative.

The real home in Europe of sacred trees in primitive times was in the northern plains. There the oak tree in particular as the tallest and most venerable species was regularly regarded as sacred, and associated with the chief male deity worshipped by the tribe: often a sky-god of general type resembling Zeus or Juppiter. In fact the cult of the god of the oak in various forms was so widespread that Frazer was originally led to suppose that this and not a sky-god was the primitive type of the Indo-European deity from whom Zeus and Juppiter arose. In the territory of the pagan Prussians as a sixteenth-century author, Erasmus Stella, records there was not merely a practice of general veneration of consecrated groves.⁷ 'Trees of exceptional height such as the oaks, they said, the gods dwelt in, from which, when they made enquiries, replies were

heard to be given. On this account they used never to cut this kind of tree, but worshipped them piously as the homes of supernatural powers.' Stella gives generally a very sober account of pre-Christian Prussia and shows no signs of trying to impart into his descriptions analogies from classical literature. So there seems no reason to doubt the veracity of his account, which provides the closest parallel in northern Europe to the practices of Dodona.

In finding the nearest equivalents not elsewhere in Greece, but in Rome or old Prussia, for the consultation of sacred trees, it is worth while also to look in both directions for analogies to the curious behaviour of the Selloi. They slept on the ground apparently for religious reasons, though the scholiasts do not understand the custom. In Rome the corresponding official was the Flamen Dialis, as priest of Juppiter. He was hedged around with many curious taboos and ritual observances, which are listed at length by Aulus Gellius. Among these 'the feet of the bed on which he sleeps must be smeared with a thin layer of mud and he must not sleep three nights consecutively away from that bed, nor must any one else sleep in it'. Gellius offers no explanation, but Fraser was probably right when he accounted for it as 'a mitigation of an older custom of sleeping on the ground' and referred to the Selloi as preserving the primitive ritual.⁸ Presumably when the taboo on the Flamen Dialis' use of a bed was relaxed, it was decided that contact with the ground could be sufficiently maintained by smearing the legs of the bed with mud. It still remained a very exceptional bed, appropriate to the Flamen, and forbidden to anyone else. The link between the Flamen and the Selloi in this respect does not seem to have lain in the possession of prophetic powers—for the Flamen is never credited with these—but rather in the possession of a general spiritual potency which showed itself in different forms in Rome and Dodona, but in both places had to be guarded by similar taboos.

Fraser calls attention also to the analogy with old Prussia. There the priest of the god Potrimro was bound to sleep on the bare earth for three nights before he sacrificed to the deity.⁹ It is most significant to find in the same district in northern Europe where oak trees were expected to answer questions because they were the homes of gods that the pagan priests could also be required to observe the same taboo as at Dodona. Again, as in the case of the Flamen Dialis, there is no proof that it was directly connected

with practices of oracular enquiry. But the coincidence seems more than merely accidental. It is a long distance from Prussia to Epirus, but there is no impossibility in supposing some link between the inhabitants of the two places. If nothing else, we are faced with the circumstance that in the shaft graves at Mycenae there were found quantities of amber beads, of which the material has been proved by chemical analysis to have come from the Baltic. Thus in primitive times there was at least a trade route from Prussia to the Mediterranean. But more likely we should picture the connection as antedating the trade in amber and going back to the diffusion of neolithic peoples of Indo-European language. That in this instance the movement of ideas as well as of races was likely to be from north to south rather than in the reverse direction can probably be assumed from the fact that it centres round the oak tree, a more typical product of the northern forests in its finest development, and not likely even in earlier times to have found its best habitat in most parts of Greece.

Frazer notes as the nearest analogy to the requirement that the Selloi sleep on the ground the rule that the Agnihotris, the Brahmanical fire-priests of India, were similarly required to sleep on the ground. Their closest parallel is with the Flamen Dialis, as they were hedged round with numerous taboos similar to his, and it is at least possible that the very name, Flamen, indicates that originally his primary duty was to act as a fire-priest and blow the embers or fan the fire.

It is therefore interesting that India is also the place where it would be easiest to find analogies for the practice of abstaining from washing. The Vedas contain instructions of this kind, and it is commonly associated with many types of Indian ascetic. Nothing similar is recorded in pagan Prussia, and our Latin sources do not seem to know of the custom, but, strangely enough, one of the Homeric scholiasts records that Alexander of Pleuron, a Hellenistic scholar, explained it on the ground that the Selloi 'were descended from the Tyrrhenians and through an ancestral practice worship Zeus in this way'.¹⁰ So he seems to have heard of something of the sort in Etruria. The idea that abstinence from washing could be a form of religious ritual was quite foreign to the classical Greek, but the very word used by Homer—'with unwashen feet'—is found in use in the Roman period in Asia Minor.¹¹ At Tralles in Caria in A.D. 200 or later there was a local cult of

Zeus Larasios whose priestesses were officially designated 'concubines' of the god. One of them (evidently a member of a priestly family) described herself proudly in a dedication as descended from ancestors who were 'concubines and with unwashen feet'. The recurrence of this extremely rare word cannot be merely accidental. But in this context it is unsafe to build any elaborate theory that a primitive cult of Zeus with features common to Dodona was once widely distributed in the eastern Mediterranean, but in imperial times only survived in Caria. The priests who avoided ablutions at Dodona were male and appear to act thus in connection with their prophetic functions. The priestesses in Caria, if they were prophetesses, and this is unproved, must have enjoyed that power because they were concubines of the god. Probably the two instances of asceticism in regard to foot-washing had no original connection. The local Carian god was identified with Zeus by the Greeks, and because there was some local taboo on his concubines washing it occurred to someone by imperial times to use this Homeric word with some touch of learned affectation.

An instance of somewhat similar archaism but with a closer link with Dodona is found in Antioch. There it is not a question of unwashen feet, but of sleeping on the ground. Malalas records of the 'Alytarch' in the time of the emperor Commodus, that 'he was honoured and worshipped like Zeus himself during the days [of the festival.]'¹² For the same period he might not go up into his house or recline on a bed, but out of doors he slept on the ground on top of stones and clean rugs and rush-matting. He wore a gilded robe white as snow and a crown of tourmaline and other gems and carried an ebony staff and wore white sandals on his feet. He slept during that period in the forecourt of the so-called palace of the emperors, which was founded by the Dictator Julius [Caesar].'

The Alytarch is the name of a functionary originally known from evidence at Olympia where he was not a priest, but a police official, charged with maintaining public order at the festivals. But even at Olympia in later times the posts of priest and alytarch could be doubled by the same person. At Antioch by the time of Commodus the association was even closer, and the Alytarch took over at the time of festivals the position and duties of the priest of Zeus. It was in his priestly capacity that he had to sleep on the ground out of doors. It seems as though the primitive austerity of the rite was somewhat mitigated by use of rugs and mats, but

still in essence it was the same as the custom of the Selloi of lying on the ground. The interesting and essentially insoluble problem is what stages, if any, may have intervened. For instance, our authorities never mention this practice as observed by the priests of Zeus at Olympia, but it is possible to conjecture with Schenk von Stauffenberg that it was so observed, and to suppose that the rite was borrowed from Olympia by the authorities of Antioch in the same way in which they borrowed the title *Alytarch*. It need not be supposed that the silence of our literary authorities is any disproof that such a custom had existed at Olympia and survived in a mitigated form late enough to be imitated in Antioch. Certainly at the time when that city was founded (300 B.C.) it is most unlikely that the custom in its original form still survived at Dodona, or our Homeric commentators would have known of it.

These Asiatic links with Dodona in Imperial times do not cast much light on the original rites of Dodona itself which are best to be understood as essentially primitive in character and springing from roots which are shared by the rudimentary cults of Italy and northern Europe. Hence our ancient authorities do not explain to us the theological implications of Dodona's rites. In fact they probably date back to a stage when the priests who observed them were scarcely articulate. The attempt to suggest an interpretation must remain hypothetical. But may one conjecture that they felt that earth was the source of power? The idea would be appropriate to a priesthood to whom the oak was the manifestation of divinity. The massive growth of the tree from its spreading roots was a visible demonstration of this force, and the practices of the Selloi were probably to bring them into touch with it as directly and continuously as might be, and not to do anything to wipe off the traces which contact with the earth had left.

Similarly, the oak's precise significance in the theology of Dodona is never clearly stated. Was the tree the home of god as the pagan Prussians believed, or was it even the god himself in visible form, or more indefinitely was it simply a divine object which acted as the instrument of his prophecies? The god and the tree are nowhere identified in Greek literature, but the notion of a supernatural spirit dwelling in a tree, but distinct from it, was very early established in Greece. Such spirits, however, were not regarded as great gods, nor even individualized. They are one variety of the nymphs, whose connection with trees is already

suggested in Homer and explicitly described in the Homeric hymn to Aphrodite and a fragment of Pindar.¹³ According to them the tree-nymphs are not immortal though their life-span is long. A tree—the hymn-writer names the pine and the oak, as the typical examples of the evergreen and deciduous species—was born at the same time as the nymph and when it withered and decayed she perished with it. Nymphs, treated as a collective plural, were frequently the object of popular cults in the countryside, and those attached to trees were probably included in this worship. But it was utterly different from the status of the oak in the ritual of Dodona. The nymphs were very minor deities, not pictured as being ordinarily concerned with the decrees of fate and with prophecy. They were spirits of birth and fruitfulness, and, as Nilsson says, were only casually concerned with divination.¹⁴ Hence while it is possible that in some primitive stage of religious thought, the Selloi believed that Zeus actually dwelt in his sacred oak, it is unlikely that this interpretation was to be found in historic times. The analogy of the nymphs would fit too uncomfortably on the father of gods and men. From Homer onwards Zeus 'dwells in heaven or Olympus, which may be localized as the top of the highest mountain in Greece, but often is indistinguishable from the sky. Hence the oak at Dodona, even if the original barbarian inhabitants either identified it with the supreme god or pictured him as dwelling in it, was to the Greek from Homeric times onward only a consecrated object through which the god exerted his power.

How, then, did this power manifest itself? The references in Homer and all the early writers describe the oak as speaking and seem to imply by this that it uttered Zeus' prophecies in human language. Odysseus was to 'listen to the counsel from the high-foliaged oak of Zeus', and the bough of the oak set in the frame of Argo is even more precisely described as speaking. The latest author to give this positive picture is Aeschylus.¹⁵ Modern commentators naturally enough have rationalized all this legend, and have supposed that what really happened was that the Selloi interpreted the rustlings of the leaves and the creaking of the branches. This may be a correct paraphrase of the ancient tradition, but it is worth remarking that it finds no support in ancient literature before a very late period. The earliest description of the oak tree as giving a prophetic indication by the noise of its

branches is in Ovid and even there the scene is not set in Dodona though the poet has carefully indicated a connection.

In the *Metamorphoses* Aeacus describes how he had lost all his subjects by a devastating plague, and had prayed to Juppiter either to give him back his people or bury him also.¹⁶ 'By chance there stood near by with few but spreading boughs an oak consecrated to Juppiter sprung from the seed of Dodona. Here we observed corn-bearing ants in a long column, carrying a mighty load in their tiny jaws and keeping to their own track on the rugged bark. While I wonder at their numbers, I cry "Good father, grant me as many citizens and fill up my empty city-walls." The high oak shook and by the movement of its branches without a breath of wind produced a sound.' This miraculous manifestation evidently signified that Juppiter had heard the prayer and would answer it. Ovid goes on to describe how the omen of the ants and the quivering oak tree was repeated again in a dream to Aeacus only that the ants appeared to turn into men and when he woke he found it true.

This story is prettily told in Ovid's best manner and while the legend is known in other authors and is evidently based on a fanciful derivation of Myrmidon from the Greek word for an ant (*myrmex*), the details are most likely to be Ovid's own invention. In particular he is probably responsible for the prophetic oak derived from that of Dodona. It thus provides our earliest example of a statement from a literal source implying that the tree could give omens by the sound of its branches. At the same time one must notice that this was not a scene of oracular consultation. Aeacus uttered a spontaneous prayer which was answered by a miraculous omen from the tree, but it would have seemed all too peculiar in the context if the oak had actually replied to the suppliant in words. Hence as evidence for what was to be expected at an archaic consultation of the oracle at Dodona, it is only of secondary importance.

The only later references are not very dependable either as evidence. Philostratus in his *Imagines* describes a picture of the scene at Dodona which is highly colourful and elaborate, but beneath its rhetoric gives little sound fact.¹⁷ Not the tree itself, but a golden dove which perches on it, is described as speaking, but the oracles are also attributed at the same time to the oak which is described as having 'wreaths fastened to it because it produces

prophecies like the tripod at Delphi'. Presumably the analogy is that just as the Pythia prophesied on account of seating herself on the tripod, so the golden dove prophesied after perching on the tree. The whole account is a very mannered performance. It may be founded to some extent on an actual painting which Philostratus is describing. If so, it is of Hellenistic date, third century B.C. at earliest: and it only showed a golden dove sitting on an oak decorated with wreaths and surrounded by various enquirers and priestly officials. Philostratus added the rhetorical explanations.

Finally well into the Byzantine period the *Suda* gave an entry under the name of Dodona.¹⁸ 'A city in Thesprotian Pelasgia, where used to stand an oak, in which was an oracle-centre of female prophets. When those consulting the oracle entered, the oak forsooth was stirred making a sound, and the women used to speak "Thus saith Zeus".' Here we have a clear, though bald, account of oracular procedure in which the oak tree's rustlings or creaks are interpreted by prophetesses in the terms of a verbal oracle of the god. The fact that the officials are represented as female, not male, is in accordance with a period later than the Selloi, as we shall later see. But apart from that, the account might be based on authentic tradition, and it might have been correct in showing, with some irony appropriate to a Christian commentator, that the speaking oak communicated simply by noises. But the remainder of the paragraph describes how a bronze statue struck a cauldron with a rod, and this, as we shall see, is a garbled account obviously produced in this form when the oracle was in abeyance. So there is no need to regard the earlier part of the description with its reference to the noises from the oak as being anything else but a later reconstruction.

This length of discussion is not meant to suggest that the oak of Dodona actually spoke, but simply that we do not know what natural phenomenon, if any, was the foundation for the belief. It may have been the noises of the branches in movement or of the leaves rustling, but it may equally well have been that the Selloi themselves claimed to hear sounds inaudible to anyone else, whether this was priestly pretence or pious hallucination.

So far in discussing the oak we have used that conventional botanical term. But it is worth while to devote some little consideration to the proper classification of the tree, as far as this is possible.

Actually to the modern botanist the oaks of the eastern Mediterranean present a highly complicated problem.¹⁹ At least eleven different species are believed to occur in north-west Greece, but considerable doubt and dispute remains on the question whether certain types are real species or only local varieties. The Greek botanists, such as Theophrastus, recognized that there were four or five types of oak, but, of course, we cannot expect that the ordinary Greek, especially before the Hellenistic period, would distinguish them on scientific principles. The basic considerations would be general appearance, whether the leaves fell off in winter or not, and what natural products in timber or fruit it supplied. Of the various names used of different types of oak two are applied to the tree at Dodona by different authors. One is the generic term [Drys] which seems to have covered any variety of oak tree and could even be used as the typical name in referring to deciduous trees generally.²⁰ The other word (Phegos) was evidently used much more specifically and applied to a variety which was native to Greece and produced edible acorns. The fact that the form of name resembles, and is obviously connected philologically, with the Latin word *Fagus* tempts to misinterpretation. But it is sufficiently clear from the ancient references that whereas the Latins applied the name 'Fagus' to the beech, the Greeks applied the name 'Phegos' to a variety of oak. Modern authorities are mostly satisfied to identify it with *Quercus macrolepis*, a species now extended to include *Quercus aegilops*.²¹

This is the Valonia oak, a semi-evergreen type, losing its leaves in late winter or early spring.²² In good moist soil it reaches about 80 feet in height, but seldom grows more than 30 to 40 feet in arid situations. The acorns ripen every second year and there is good evidence that they were used for human food until recently in Greece and Turkey. The modern name well indicates that this species has a home in north-west Greece. 'Valonia' was used since the early eighteenth century as the trade term for the extremely large acorn cups and acorns of *Quercus macrolepis* which were exported from Valonia, a port in Albania, and used for obtaining tannin in preparing leather. Both the port and the exported product seem to have derived their name ultimately from the same Greek word for acorn—*Balanos*. The oaks of the hinterland supplied the raw material. So it would be perfectly reasonable to expect that over three thousand years ago there grew on the

site of Dodona a Valonia oak, which in a rather fertile and moist position was of magnificent growth.²³

One further point is worth mention before we leave the subject of the oak. In our ancient authorities referring to Dodona, except in Aeschylus, the tree is always mentioned in the singular. There is usually no suggestion of a sacred grove, but of one particular specimen. This raises the question of the longevity of the oak. As a tree it has been traditionally the example for poets to choose to illustrate long survival, and undoubtedly the life of a healthy specimen might be measured in centuries. But, even so, much more than five hundred years would be highly exceptional, and, while it is impossible to draw a rigid line, seven or eight hundred years would seem to represent the ultimate limit. Of course it would always be possible that the priests of Dodona, when they saw the venerable oak begin to show signs of decay, planted an acorn from the original tree and thus perpetuated the stock. But there is nothing in our sources which supports this hypothesis. So we must at least be prepared to believe that if the Selloi were consulting a single sacred oak about the time of the Trojan war, if it was then not much more than a century old, it was scarcely likely to have survived much longer than to 500 B.C.

NOTES

¹ Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I², 280 ff.

² *h. Ap.* 394. Cf. Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 3.

³ For general associations of the oak with Zeus, cf. *Ar. Nu.* 402 and *Av.* 480 with sch. For special associations with Zeus Lykaios, Pliny, *HN*, 8, 81 (were-wolves), Paus. 8, 38, 4 (rain-magic) and Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I², 399 and 425.

⁴ Livy I, 10, 5. *Plu. Rom.* 16.

⁵ Pliny, *HN*, 17, 243. He also refers to Aristandros of Telmissos (Alexander's seer) as having a book full of omens from trees, but does not indicate that they spoke. C. Epidius was probably a mythical personage, chosen as a suitable author, to whom to attribute a text-book on omens. He belonged to Nuceria and, after falling into the source of the river Sarnus, emerged with horns on his head and vanished to join the gods (*Suet. de Rhet.* 4).

⁶ Livy, 3, 25, 6. My attention was first called to this passage by Professor Alföldi.

⁷ Erasmus Stella, *de Borussae antiquitatibus*, II, 520.

⁸ Aulus Gellius, 10, 15, 14. Fraser, *Golden Bough*, II³, 248.

⁹ Christopher Hartnoch, *Selectae dissertationes historicae de variis rebus Prussicis* [in Petrus de Duisburg, *Chronicon Prussiae*, Jena, 1674], Diss. X, p. 162.

¹⁰ Sch. A. *Il.* 16, 235.

¹¹ W. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, I, no. 115 and p. 95. Ruge,

P.W. VI, A, 2118. F. Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales*⁴, 258. L. Robert, *Etudes Anatoliennes* (1937), 406. K. Latte, *HTR*, 33 (1940), 9-18.

¹² Malalas, 12, p. 286, 12. See also A. Schenk von Stauffenberg, *Die Römische Kaisergeschichte bei Malalas* (1931), 412 ff. Alytarchs at Olympia, Luc, *Herm.*, 40; *Inscr. Olymp.* no. 59 (with Dittenberger's commentary), 435 and 437. At Tralles, *BCH*, 28, 81 and *Num. Chr.*, 1963, 9 (A. M. Woodward). The only reference to sleeping on the ground at Olympia itself appears to be the statement (Paus. 5, 7, 7) that because of the abundance of wild olives there the Idaean Dactyls used to sleep on the leaves of that tree. But though Weniger, *Klio*, 7 (1907) 175, connects it with Dodona, this seems unconvincing. The Dactyls have no links with Epirus and appear to be a late intrusion into the mythology of Olympia.

¹³ Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I², 246 ff.

¹⁴ Nilsson, op. cit., 249.

¹⁵ Hom. *Od.* 14, 327 and 19, 266; A. *Pr.* 832.

¹⁶ Ovid. *Met.* 7, 614 ff.

¹⁷ Philostr. *Im.* 2, 33.

¹⁸ Suid. s.v. Δωδώνη.

¹⁹ On the oak, see H. J. Elwes and A. Henry, *Trees of Great Britain and Ireland* (Edin., 1910), vol. V, where not only the native species, but also those introduced are discussed in detail with photographs. Also P.W. 5, 2013, s.v. Eiche (Olck) and s.v. Buche (Max C. P. Schmidt). On the whole question I have been kindly assisted by my colleague, Professor D. A. Webb.

²⁰ For δρῦς used of the tree at Dodona: Hom. *Od.* 14, 328; 19, 297; A. *Pr.* 832; S. *Tr.* 1168; Pl. *Phdr.* 275b; D. H. 1, 14, 5 and *Rh.* 6; Str. 7, 7, 10; Philoxenus ap. St. Byz. s.v. Δωδώνη; Paus. 7, 21, 2 and 8, 23, 5. Max. Tyr. 8, 1b. Philostr. *Im.* 2, 33. Sch. A.T. II. 16, 233.

For φηγός used similarly: Hes. *fr.* 212 and 134, 8; S. *Tr.* 171; Hdt. 2, 55, 2; A.R. 1, 527 and 4, 583; Eur. *Melanippe Desmotis* (Page, *Greek Literary Papyri*, I, 112); Zenodotus, Cineas and Euphorion ap. St. Byz. s.v. Δωδώνη; Paus. 1, 17, 5; Luc. *Am.* 31; Apollod. 1, 9, 16; Orph. *Arg.* 218 and 1161.

As examples of the freedom in the use of these alternatives, it may be noted that Sophocles in different passages in the same play uses either word. Similarly, Pausanias twice uses one and once the other in different contexts, while Strabo after quoting φηγός from Hesiod uses δρῦς in his own comment. *Quercus* is the only word used in Latin authors.

²¹ Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I², 426, after a good survey of the literature sums up excessively sceptically that we do not know whether the sacred tree at Dodona was an oak. For a contrary view, cf. P. R. Franke, *Die antiken Münzen von Epirus*, II, 321. Apart from a reasonable consideration of the literary evidence, full weight must be given to the bronze oak leaves and acorns found on the site by Carapanos (*Ruines*, pl. 49, nos. 8, 10 and 12) and Evangelides. (*Epir. Chron.* 1935, 238).

²² See Elwes and Henry, op. cit., V, pp. 1268 ff. and pl. 321.

²³ It is interesting to note that Olck (P.W. s.v. Eiche) when discussing *Quercus macrolepis* states that it is 'little different from our German oaks'. We have already seen occasion to compare the cult traditions of the pagan Prussians and the Selloi. While not expecting these primitive priesthoods to apply

rigid botanical standards, it is at least interesting to note that comparisons between the trees which they made the object of cult are not based arbitrarily on the use of names, but actually correspond to a real resemblance. In one curious detail the resemblance is very close. *Quercus macrolepis* is semi-evergreen, retaining its leaves till late winter or early spring. Christopher Hartknoch in *Dissertatio* VI at the end of his editions of Petrus de Duisburg, *Chronicon* (Jena, 1679) describes two famous sacred oaks in pagan Prussia—the *Quercus romoveana* and a second oak near Heiligenbeil—‘quac non minus aestate quam hieme, opera procul dubio Diaboli, adsidue virebat!’

CHAPTER III

THE DOVE AND THE ORIGINS OF DODONA

In Homer the oracle of Dodona is mentioned without any allusion to its origin. Both in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey* it is taken for granted as an institution. But there were legends about its foundation which have all the appearance of primitive folk tales, but only occur in sources of Hellenistic or later date. They cannot be proved to go back to the time of the epic poets, though it is very likely that in some form they did. Also they are worth considering at this point because they introduce another element into the picture besides the Selloi and the oak. This is the dove as a bird associated with the oracle and the tree.

Before looking at the versions of the legend itself it may be noted that the association of the dove with Zeus is highly primitive. It may not seem as familiar in this connection as the eagle, but a passage in the *Odyssey* proves that it is at least as old as Homer.¹ There Circe is describing the *Planctai*—the Wandering Rocks—which Odysseus must avoid. She tells him that 'no winged thing even passes by that way, not even the timorous doves which bear ambrosia to father Zeus. But even of them the smooth rock from time to time takes one away, and the father sends another to make up the number'. It is a puzzling passage which gave trouble to scholars in antiquity. Why the doves should be bringing ambrosia to Zeus is not clear. The Hellenistic poetess, Moero,² described them as bearing food for the growing Zeus, while he was hidden in Mount Ida on Crete. They brought ambrosia from the streams of Ocean, while an eagle carried nectar. But though some Homeric editors, such as Crates, accepted this as the explanation of the passage, it does not fit satisfactorily. The implication of the present tenses and the suggestion of recurring disappearances of the birds followed by their replacement by others will not suit with a period in the past when Zeus was a child. To Homer evidently the doves were the constant servants of Zeus, and the fact

that later scholars found this difficult to explain only proves the primitiveness of the idea.

Also it is remarkable, at least, that the reference occurs in the same passage which we have cited previously for its allusion to the Argo. It would not be possible to prove that the two ideas came from the same source, but at least they are from the same stratum of early legend, and it may even be true that, as the original story of the Argonauts had close connections with Dodona, so also the idea of doves associated with Zeus goes back to an early origin in the same place.

It is interesting to notice that in the legend of the Argonauts a dove and dangerous rocks reappear but with a somewhat different motive. There Phineus warns the heroes of the danger of the Clashing Rocks (Symplegades), which seem to be another version of the Planctae, and advises that the way to pass through them is first to release a dove from the prow and see if it achieves the passage.³ If it did, then the Argo could follow. They obey this instruction and successfully pass through the peril. In the latest version of the legend, the pseudo-Orphic, the bird is not released by the Argonauts, but sent by Athena, and so appropriately it is changed from a dove to a heron since that was a bird particularly associated with that goddess. But no doubt in the original legend the Argo was guided not merely by the instructions of its speaking bough, but also by the bird associated with Dodona.⁴

The legend connecting Dodona's origin with a dove appears in three variant forms in our tradition. The earliest version may be the one which has survived least fully in our authorities. According to it one Hellos an 'oak-cutter' was shown the oracle-centre by a dove, and Philostratus describes his axe as still lying beneath the tree where he let it go. Evidently the picture, though not fully sketched in our authorities as extant, was that Hellos in the ordinary course of his tree-felling came to the oak of Zeus which was not as yet recognized as sacred, but when he attempted to hew it down a dove perched on the tree, addressed him in human speech and warned him of his unwitting impiety. Presumably it also explained that the tree of Zeus was capable of speaking prophecies. So Hellos must have desisted from his purpose, and became instead of a wood-cutter the first of the priests of Zeus at Dodona. For evidently by his name he was the eponymous ancestor, in the alternative form, of Homer's Selloi. The form 'Helloi' went back

at least to Pindar, if not even to Hesiod. Unfortunately, we cannot prove that the legend went as far back, though it is very possible.⁵

One other point remains; Hellos or Selloos is described in the Homeric scholia by an ambiguous phrase which means either 'the Thessalian' or 'the son of Thessalos'.⁶ In either event the intention is evidently to derive him not from the Molossi, but from north-eastern Greece. We have seen in the *Homeric Catalogue* and elsewhere a tendency for Dodona to be grouped with Thessaly and connected with it by the Metsovo pass. It would be hard to prove on the basis of this legend that Dodona was in origin a Thessalian foundation. But it seems to belong to the phase in which Thessaly and Dodona were closely linked, and, though it is never cited from an early authority, may actually date from that primitive period.

The second version is a much more detailed story preserved *in extenso* in the scholia to the *Odyssey*, and not found elsewhere.⁷ According to it 'A shepherd keeping his sheep in the marshes of Dodona stole the fair flock of a neighbour and kept it shut in his own fold. Thereupon they say the owner sought the stolen sheep among the shepherds, and when he failed to find it asked the god who was the thief. That was the occasion as they say when the oak tree first uttered a voice and said that it was the youngest of the followers who was guilty. When he had searched out the meaning of the response, he found the sheep at the house of the shepherd who had most recently come to pasture in that region. For shepherds are called "followers". The thief's name was Mardylas. It is said that in anger at the oak, he wanted to cut it down by night. But a dove from the trunk popped out its head and ordered him not to do it. He was too frightened to venture further and did not touch this sacred tree. But even so the Epirotes were righteously angry with him for his daring impiety, and therefore after exacting a penalty from him for his stubbornness they established a prophet. The story occurs in Proxenus.'

This legend is a curious mixture of the folk-tale and the comparatively sophisticated. The anonymous shepherd, who appears to ask an oak tree spontaneously to identify a thief, sounds like a character of popular legend in his apparently irrational action. His story, like that in Livy⁸ about the Roman ambassadors told by the Aequi to complain to an oak-tree, seems to come down from the time when a sacred tree and a god were indistinguishable in the peasant's mind. On the other hand the actual response is a

somewhat mannered production. In its first utterance the oak of Dodona is already made to employ the kind of ambiguity which is sometimes attributed to the less convincing Delphic oracles. There are two amphibolies in the sentence. The word for 'youngest' can also mean 'latest' and the literal word for 'follower', while most frequently applied to a 'servant' could, so this passage suggests, be used of the shepherd following his flock. Thus what might at first hearing seem to mean 'the most youthful servant' must really mean 'the latest shepherd to arrive'.

It was, of course, a favourite idea of the Greeks that the gods did not speak directly to man in unequivocal terms, but gave their messages in ambiguous phrases. The typical story about many a divination was that the unfortunate recipient of the response was satisfied to take it at its face value and so met his doom unprepared in spite of the warning. Even in the *Odyssey*, in the one account in Homer of the consultation of an oracle, Agamemnon is deceived by the vague general phrases in which the response has been framed.⁹ But here the ambiguities are of such a minute and verbal type as to suggest a rather later age than the Homeric.

When the story continues with Mardylas, the thieving shepherd, and his attempt to hew down the tree by night, we seem to return to the realm of folk-tale. The episode faintly resembles Hellos and his hewing of the oak, but the tone is different. Hellos, so far as one can make out, was an innocent wood-cutter, who did not know the difference between the oak of Zeus and the other trees of the forest. When warned by the dove he became the ancestor of a line of priests. So no offence was attached to his act. Mardylas already knew that the oak was prophetic. His act was one of criminal impiety. The dove's warning served to frighten him, but he still remained guilty and suffered an appropriate punishment, though our text at this point is somewhat corrupt. The underlying meaning seems to be that the Epirotes fined Mardylas for impiety and established a prophet at Dodona out of the proceeds.

This composite story is cited by the scholiast from Proxenus, who is known from other quotations as the court historian of King Pyrrhus. This is an appropriate context because by that date the later developments could easily have been added to an original folk-tale. Also one difference from the story of Hellos is noticeable. There is nothing in the legend told by Proxenus to suggest any external origin for the oracle. No connection with Thessaly is

indicated. The curious form of the name, Mardylas, which does not occur elsewhere in Greek mythology, appears quite unhellenic: its nearest resemblances are to be found in some of the other Molossian personal or tribal names which do not appear to be Greek in their roots. Hence it might be correct to suppose that the core of this legend was an Epirote folk-tale, which served to explain the origins of Dodona from native sources. It is worth while to call attention to the way in which the flocks are described as pastured in the marshes of Dodona. Probably the title of the Helloi in this version as elsewhere in our tradition, was said to be derived not from an eponymous Hellos from Thessaly, but from the local marshes themselves (Hele).¹⁰

It can be seen that Proxenus' version of the origins of Dodona is based on folk-tales, but carefully designed to counter any suggestion that the oracle was derived from Thessaly. This particular tendency may have been specially appropriate at the time for a writer of strong Epirote sympathy. For about this period prominence had been given to a quite different version of the origins of Dodona which would not merely attribute its foundation to a Thessalian, but actually transfer the oracle as a working institution from Thessaly. We have already mentioned the subject in connection with Zenodotus' substitution of 'Phegonaie' for 'Dodonaie' in Achilles' prayer, but he did not necessarily accept the theory.¹¹ The earliest author who did appear to have been Suidas, a Thessalian writer of local history and legend, who probably published his work in the fourth century B.C.¹² In dealing with Dodona he evidently based himself on the Homeric passage and introduced an interpretation which fitted it to local Thessalian features. The sanctuary according to him had been transferred from the neighbourhood of Scotussa, in the district of Thessaly known as Pelasgiotis. This was made the explanation of Achilles' address to Zeus as Pelasgian. He also asserted that there was a sanctuary of Zeus Phegonaïos in Thessaly and that the god had that epithet which would appear to be the basis of Zenodotus' reading, whether Suidas had actually preceded him in suggesting it or not. The picture of Achilles praying to a Zeus whose shrine was situated in Thessaly not far north of his own home had a certain plausibility to ancient scholars who were worried at the choice of this deity. The difficulty still remained of explaining the transfer of the cult to the historic site in Epirus. Suidas, as paraphrased in later

citations, said that 'the oak tree had been burnt down by certain persons and that the sanctuary was transferred to Dodona in accordance with an oracle of Apollo'. This explanation is too naively simple to carry much conviction and the reference to Apollo as sanctioning the transfer is only what we might expect in an invention of the classical period, when the Delphic oracle was usually consulted over ritual problems such as the changing of a cult. It is inconceivable that the oracle of Dodona actually owed its site in Epirus to Apolline direction. In one other feature, too, Suidas would appear to have followed contemporary rather than primitive custom. He describes 'many women as following the transfer from whom were descended the prophetesses'. As we shall see in the fourth century the oracle was normally operated by women, not men.¹³ It looks as though Suidas was able to explain this change by connecting it with the removal of the oracle. He left behind the Selloi in Thessaly together with their peculiar practices.

We can easily see that Suidas' account with its Thessalian and Apolline prejudices would not commend itself to a patriotic Epirote. But it may not have been Suidas' work, but a more recent publication which stimulated Proxenus to issue his rival version. Our ancient sources cite together with Suidas another and more famous Thessalian, Cineas, the orator-diplomat attached to King Pyrrhus' court.¹⁴ He too wrote a book on Thessalian history and (not surprisingly) seems to have dwelt with great emphasis on the connections between his native country and Epirus. As Pyrrhus himself managed for much of his reign to maintain his sovereignty over Thessaly, Cineas may have found a convenient subject for eulogy of his master, himself a descendant of Achilles. How exactly he pictured the transfer from Thessaly to Epirus is lost by a lacuna in Strabo's description,¹⁵ but it is implied that it was somehow more fantastic than Suidas' version and Jacoby has ingeniously conjectured that Cineas did not allow the oak to be burnt in Thessaly, but imagined it as removed bodily to Epirus. It was probably in answer to this extravagant reassertion of Thessalian nationalism that Proxenus published (apparently for the first time) his local version of the origin of the oracle.

It need not be doubted that the cult of Zeus was not imported into Dodona. Archaeological evidence will not carry back the dedication of offerings before the eighth century. But the site itself

had been inhabited, though perhaps only seasonally, for many centuries before the archaic Greek period. The alleged existence of a previous cult in Thessaly has no early evidence to support it. The epithet Phegonaïos as applied to Zeus is not otherwise known, and Suidas could not point to an existing cult of a sacred oak surviving on the site or he would not have needed to represent it as having been burnt. The derivation of the oracle of Dodona from a site in Thessaly is simply the product of Thessalian nationalism working on a Homeric passage which needed no such hypothesis to explain it. When Achilles called on Zeus as 'dwelling afar' he was not thinking of him specifically in relation to his own position in the Troad. He was describing the Dodonaean Zeus as he seemed to all Greek worshippers, and all the rest of the passage hangs together with this significance and works on the hearer by its emotive appeal.

Besides the legends of Hellos and Mardylas there was a third account of the local establishment of the oracle which was somewhat different in its purpose. It does not so much give the primeval origin of the oracle as its historical re-foundation. It attributes the establishment of Dodona to Deucalion, the Greek Noah. After the flood, as the Homeric scholia record, he went to Epirus and consulted an oracle at the oak. A dove sitting on the tree told him to settle in the spot. So he married Dodona, an Oceanid, a daughter of Zeus and named the place after her and collected the remnants of humanity and settled them in the neighbourhood. The scholiast and other Byzantine sources attribute the story to Thrasyboulus and Acestodorus, two rather obscure authors who probably lived in the Hellenistic period. But the connection between Deucalion and the neighbourhood of Dodona can be traced back to Aristotle in the late fourth century, who already assumes it as known.¹⁶

It is an interesting point to note that Dodona is not the only oracle-centre to be associated with Deucalion. Delphi equally laid claim to him. The legend as fully developed later was that the ark landed on Mount Parnassus and that Deucalion founded the town of Lycoreia on the high plateau above the Pleistos valley. He and his wife Pyrrha consulted the oracle on a method to restore the human race and were told by Themis to throw over their shoulders the bones of their mother.¹⁷ They solved the riddle by recognizing that stones are the bones of the earth-mother, and the stones thus thrown turned into men and women. Deucalion also found a place

in various Delphic legends and genealogies: in particular the Hosioi ('the Holy ones'), who were a priestly clan responsible for some of the sacred rites, claimed to be his descendants.

Here as before in connection with the Argonauts, we find Dodona and Delphi both striving to stake a claim in a valuable stretch of primitive saga. It is quite probable that Deucalion did not belong originally to either district. A fragment of Hesiod locates him in eastern Locris, where in historic times traditions of him and his wife as local heroes still survived. Also Pindar, though he makes him land on Parnassus, brings him to Locris to throw his stones and dwell there without any indication that he had consulted the Delphic oracle on the subject. In fact the versions which make him settle in the neighbourhood of Parnassus and consult the oracle there are likely to be later sophistications. One can note how in Ovid, for instance, the response is given not by the Pythia, but by Themis. Whoever composed this version was conscious that if Apollo came to Delphi first when the neighbourhood was already peopled, as the Homeric hymn shows, it must have been long after Deucalion's flood. So the oracle is represented as conducted by Apollo's predecessor, Themis. But this self-conscious adaptation of the legend is clearly not primitive.¹⁸

Probably the original version simply made the ark land on a high mountain, and Parnassus was very satisfactory for this purpose, though Hellanicus as late as the latter half of the fifth century¹⁹ perhaps rather polemically, could maintain the claims of Mount Orthys. The command to create mankind from stones was in the earliest versions simply a message from Zeus, and was probably not pictured as a response to an oracular enquiry, but, for instance, an instruction conveyed by Hermes. It was only later that both Delphi and Dodona took hold of this legend for their own purposes. Which was the first in the field cannot be proved. It is easy, however, to see how it would appeal to the priesthood at Dodona. Already by the mid-fifth century, and probably earlier they were stressing the primeval antiquity of their oracle against all others. The point was particularly telling when used against Delphi, where the coming of Apollo was not regarded as primeval. So the most plausible supposition would have been to connect Dodona with Deucalion, as the type of primitive man. Whether there was any appropriate adjustment of the legend in other details, such as that the ark landed on Mount Tomaros, we

do not know. Also curiously enough, our authorities do not give the traditional story of the response about casting stones. Instead the dove simply tells Deucalion to settle there. This variation is perhaps adopted because according to the Epirote version, Deucalion is not accompanied by a wife. Instead of being already married to Pyrrha, he proceeds to marry an Ocean nymph who is the eponym of the town which he founds.²⁰ The only link with the two previous versions of the origin of the Dodonaean oracle is that the message of Zeus is given by a dove seated on his sacred tree. In the previous versions the dove spoke in warning of the impiety of hewing it down. Here instead it gave a typical oracular response advising the founding of a colony. In fact it is left at least possible, and perhaps more clearly implied in the original versions, that Deucalion was not the first to enquire of the oak, but was reviving an antediluvian custom.

[Incidentally in one somewhat charming way the Homeric scholiast manages to connect Deucalion's flood with Dodona.²⁰ He suggests that here lies the explanation of the unwashed feet of the Selloi. When they were wandering after being saved from the flood, they had vowed this ritual practice to Zeus. Is one to suspect the scholiast had a sense of humour in suggesting that the survivors of the deluge had had enough of water to foreswear its use for ablutions ever after?]

From the point of view of the Dodonaean priesthood this version of the legend was eminently satisfactory. Whereas Hellos or Mardylas appear vaguely timeless in the manner of primitive folk-tales, Deucalion served to fix the establishment of the oracle of Dodona in the earliest epoch of Greek history. But also the legend gives the dove another function. Instead of simply acting as an initial warning of the sacredness of the oak, it becomes an ordinary mouthpiece of prophecy. In one way, of course, the dove was always superfluous in the legend. If the oak could talk, it could itself have told Hellos or Mardylas to desist from hewing it. But it is perhaps only to be expected of folk-tale that it may have used superfluous mechanism to emphasize its point. The sacredness of a talking oak is enhanced by the words of a talking dove, and both oak and dove are traditionally associated with Zeus. But after having fulfilled its purpose by calling attention to the oracular tree, the dove should have relapsed into silence. Instead in the legend of Deucalion and in various general references we

find that it is not the oak, but the dove that utters the messages of Zeus.

The word used for dove in our Greek authors (*Peleia*, *Peleias*) is the most general name for birds of the type of the pigeon.²² It is as old as Homer where it occurs frequently, and in him apparently refers always to a wild bird. At least four other words can be found in later authors used to describe different kinds, but *Peleia* or its cognate forms continues to be the word for the bird at Dodona. Our literary sources give no detailed description such as would enable one to fix the species, but the reasonable conjecture is that it was the ring-dove (*Columba palumbus palumbus*). This is not so common in Greece as the rock-dove (*Columba livia*) which is the typical species of pigeon for the country generally. In fact the ring-dove is a partial migrant, but breeds locally in all parts. Its natural habitat in Greece is the forested country. It roosts and nests for preference in tall trees and so is alternatively named 'wood-pigeon'. The call of the wood-pigeon is familiar for its varied and intense expression. More than most European birds it suggests human speech by its sound, and so would be more likely to be interpreted as uttering words. Also in the British Isles, at least, it is one of the most persistently vocal of birds, only reducing its call for a month or so in winter, but otherwise making itself heard throughout the year.

It is reasonable, then, to picture that the ring-dove from early times roosted on the sacred oak and even nested in it. Presumably they were already regarded as the sacred birds of Zeus, but even if not, this habit would have been likely to endow them with sanctity. Also once this special significance was acquired it would only be reasonable for the prophets to find in the birds as well as the tree expressions of the god's will. The voice of the ring-dove, even more than its flight and general behaviour would seem to offer indications, and we have good evidence that in primitive times prophets connected with Dodona were regarded as capable of understanding the speech of birds. We have already noticed the example of Mopsos of Titaessus. Melampus who was linked with Olympia, but may show some connection with the Selloi, will be discussed later.²³

NOTES

¹ Hom. *Od.* 12, 62.

² Mocro ap. Ath. 11, 490 e and 491 b.

³ A.R. 2, 328 ff. and 555 ff; Val. Flacc. 1, 561; Orph. *Arg.* 683 ff.; Apollod. 1, 9, 22; Prop. 3, 22, 13; Ovid, *Ib.* 265; Hyginus, *Fab.* 19, Cf. Fraser's commentary on Apollodorus and D'Arcy Thompson, 103. For the equation of the Planctae and the Symplegades, cf. Pliny, *HN.* 6, 32.

⁴ Professor George Huxley called my attention to the discussion by R. W. Hutchinson, *Prehistoric Crete*, 101, of 'navigation by pigeons'. Hutchinson shows an old traditional practice, dating from the story of Noah and the Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamish to fifth century B.C. Buddhist writings. These pigeons were used to ascertain the direction of land when invisible to the sailors. Possibly the *Argonautica* legend may owe something to this practice, but I think the choice of a dove to guide the ship is also influenced by the association with Dodona.

⁵ Philostr. *Im.* 2, 33; Sch. A, *Il.* 16, 234 on Σελλοί, Πίνδαρος ἑλλοί χωρὶς τοῦ σ, ἀπὸ ἑλλοῦ τοῦ δρυτόμου ᾧ φασὶ τὴν περιστερὰν πρῶτην καταδεῖξαι τὸ μαντεῖον. Of the four passages cited by Bowra (*fr.* 259) as evidence for Pindar, this is the only one that refers to Hellos the wood-cutter; and it would therefore be rash to suppose that Pindar mentioned him. He may only have used the form Helloi. Sch. B glosses: ἀπὸ Σελλοῦ τοῦ Θετταλοῦ τοῦτο τὸ γένος. Servius on Verg. *Aen.* 3, 466 refers to a dove at Dodona warning an unnamed wood-cutter from cutting the consecrated oak.

⁶ For Thessalus, cf. Hygin. *Fab.* 225 (the list of those who first founded temples of the gods)—Thessalus templum Iovis Dodonaei in terra Molossorum.

⁷ Sch. Hom. *Od.* 14, 327 = Proxenus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 703 f. 7. (The commentary is not yet published.)

⁸ Livy, 3, 25, 6. Cf. *supra*, p. 21.

⁹ Hom. *Od.* 8, 77 f.

¹⁰ Apollodorus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 244 f. 198 (Str. 7, 7, 10).

¹¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 2 Van der Valk, *Researches*, I, 336, note 129, argues (against Jacoby, commentary on *F.Gr. Hist.* 602 f. 11) that Zenodotus did not accept the Thessalian location.

¹² Suidas, *F.Gr. Hist.* 602 f. 11. Suidas is not stated by our sources to have been a Thessalian, but his work is cited as *Thessalica*, and the dialect form of his name indicates his origin. On this and his probable date, see Jacoby's commentary.

¹³ Cf. *infra*, p. 55.

¹⁴ Cineas, *F.Gr. Hist.* 603 f. 2.

¹⁵ Str. 7, 7, 12.

¹⁶ Sch. A.T. Hom. *Il.* 16, 233; E.M. s.v. Δωδωναῖος. The authors, Thrasybulus and Acestodorus are discussed in P.W. under their names. There Schwartz dates Acestodorus to the third century B.C. Van der Valk, *Researches*, I, 338, argues for Thrasybulus only as the source of the Deucalion and Dodone legend, and attributes to Acestodorus by emendation a Dodon, the son of Zeus and Dodone. Arist. *Mete.* 1, 572 a 41 for Deucalion and Dodona. Plu. *Pyrth.*, 1 that Deucalion and Pyrrha founded the sanctuary. Cf. Nonnus, *D.* 15, 298 for the oaks invoked in connection with them.

¹⁷ Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, no. 477. Lycoreia, Paus. 10, 6, 2. The Hosioi, Plu, 3, 438 b.

¹⁸ Hes, *fr.* 115; Pi. *O.* 9, 43; Ovid, *Met.* 1, 379. On the whole subject, see P.W. s.v. Deukalion (Tümpel).

¹⁹ Hellanicus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 4 f. 117 = Sch. Pi. O. 9, 62a.

²⁰ St. Byz. s.v. Δωδώνη, citing Epaphroditus, who in his commentary on the second book of Callimachus' *Aitia* (fr. 53, Pfeiffer) referred to Thrasybulus for this legend: Acestodorus derived the name Dodona instead from Dodon, a son of Zeus.

²¹ Sch. T. Hom. *Il.* 16, 235.

²² On the subject, see D'Arcy W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds*, (1936), 225 ff., A. F. Witherby and others, *The Handbook of British Birds*, Vol. IV (1940), 130 ff. and Anthony Lambert, A Specific Check-list of the Birds of Greece, *The Ibis* (The Quarterly Journal of the British Ornithologists' Union) Vol. 99 (1957), 43 ff. I owe the two last references to my colleague, Professor J. N. R. Grainger. Also cf. P.W. s.v. Taube (Steier).

²³ Mopsus, cf. *supra*, p. 14. Melampus, cf. *infra*, p. 165.

CHAPTER IV

DODONA FROM HESIOD TO SOPHOCLES

If we turn from the legends of Dodona's origin to follow through the epic tradition, Homer, as we saw, in his occasional references to Dodona, gives a rather indistinct, but not inconsistent picture. The Hesiodic epic only supplies two tantalizing fragments, for the place is not mentioned either as oracle or as cult site in the three poems which are extant complete. The first fragment is partly found in Strabo's description of Epirus and more fully in the scholia to Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, 1167, where it is cited as from the catalogue known as the *Eoiai*.¹ The purpose of the citation in both places is to illustrate the place-name Hellopia as meaning the district in which Dodona was situated, and so to support the view that the prophets there should be called the Helloi rather than the Selloi. The reference begins without any connecting particle, and this asyndeton seems to indicate that the quotation comes from the beginning of a new section of the work, but what the original context was cannot otherwise be ascertained. It runs:

'There is a certain Hellopia of much cornland and of good meadows, rich in flocks and shambling cattle, and in it dwell men of many sheep and many kine, many themselves in number, past telling, tribes of mortals. There is a certain Dodona built as a town at the farthest bound. It Zeus has loved and [wished it] to be his oracle-centre for mankind.' (Just at this most interesting point the citation seems to have suffered from a lacuna. It continues:) 'And they dwelt in the stock of the oak where those who live on earth fetch all their prophecies, whoever of them has come thither and enquired of the immortal god bringing gifts when he came and accompanied by good omens.'

The tone of the whole passage is very different from the Homeric references and suggests a complete change of attitude to the subject. This may be partly due to the different character of the Hesiodic catalogue—literature with its episodic treatment in contrast to the Homeric epic. At any rate here Dodona is not taken

for granted and simply used to intensify the feeling of a prayer or add realism to an imagined story. It is carefully introduced and described, and, what is more, the whole tone of the description is one of enthusiastic praise. The country of Hellopia is exceptionally productive and populous. There is no hint that the place suffers severely in winter. Dodona is situated on the far boundary, but it is an up-to-date and well-developed community. In fact it is no village, but a Polis, and Zeus has loved it and selected it as his oracle for mankind.

It is most unfortunate that the text appears to be corrupt at this point; exactly where one would expect the poet to go on to describe the particular features of the oracle. Probably he did; for no satisfactory emendation enables the lines to run on without interruption. Instead it seems necessary to leave a lacuna which may have contained several clauses of further description. What was there is not fully to be restored by conjecture. The first sentence of the next passage starts with a reference to 'the stock of the oak', which must be the sacred tree of Zeus already mentioned in the *Odyssey*. It looks as if it had just been explained in the missing clauses. The new main verb is 'they dwelt', but the subject is lacking, again no doubt supplied in the lacuna. One early editor, Valckenaer, would have both provided a subject and dispensed with the lacuna by altering the verb to 'he dwelt'. But the emendation would suppose all too simple and limited a corruption. We must expect at least a couple of hexameters to have been lost in which the 'oak tree' casually mentioned at the end of the line was properly introduced and explained. The whole tone of the passage is so carefully descriptive that nothing else would fit. Also it is too absurdly undignified for Hesiod to picture Olympian Zeus as living in the base of an oak tree.

This is not a passage of primitive folk-tale but a rather mannered vignette in late epic style. If, as modern editors do, we keep the text unemended, two possible plural subjects suggest themselves, either of which might be suitably associated with the oracle. The Selloi who slept on the ground might have made their resting-place at the foot of the sacred oak, if that is the correct meaning of the Greek. But the words seem to imply a dwelling within the tree, which is physically improbable for human occupants. The other possibility is that the subject was 'the doves'—the sacred birds who were, as we shall see, associated with the oracle. If so, this

would be their earliest appearance in Greek literature, but of course it would be unsafe to argue that they had not been known already in the time of the *Odyssey* or even of the *Iliad*, though not actually mentioned there. They could presumably have nested in the trunk of the tree: some species of dove are accustomed to use that kind of place. Some reference to these birds would then be very likely, but it is curious that the verb is in the past tense while the functioning of the oracle is very positively indicated as contemporary. In fact the lacuna in this Hesiodic passage is ultimately insoluble. The concluding sentence is easier. It is a vigorously worded eulogy of Dodona as an oracle for all mankind, to which they can come and obtain the judgements of Zeus. The poet is perhaps a little conscious that the place is rather out of the way. His verses somewhat stress the need for the enquirer to journey there. Also appropriately enough for the interests of the priesthood, he clearly states that the services of the sanctuary are not free: the enquirer must bring gifts. The further reference to good omens is less clear in meaning. It might be taken in a limiting sense that only the enquirer with good omens would be successful in his quest for an oracular response. But this would go against the general tone of the passage which is framed to stress the advantages of consultation. Probably instead it implies, not that the enquirer must be sure of good omens, but rather that those who made this pilgrimage were blessed with them. The fact that the Greek word for 'omens' also meant birds should probably not be taken as having any reference to the sacred doves. It is so usual in this metaphorical sense that no punning allusion need be intended.

If then this Hesiodic fragment is written in praise of Dodona as an oracle-centre, can it have had a deliberate purpose? The date of the Hesiodic corpus is difficult, or virtually impossible, to fix with any precision, but generally it is a product of early archaic Greece in the period before the mid-sixth century at latest and at earliest not much before 700 B.C. This is the period also of the rise of the Delphic oracle which seems first to have acquired its international repute as the source of spiritual authority for the archaic Greek colonies. One may suggest that this passage represents in effect the reaction of Dodona, striving to assert itself as a general oracle-centre for the Greek world and claiming to be the direct source of guidance from Zeus himself.

It would not be entirely strange for such a manifesto to be found

in the Hesiodic corpus, for the connections between Dodona and Boeotia in early times were traditionally close. By the mid-fifth century Hesiod had already found a place in Delphic legend, and the gnomic and popular style of some of his poetry has close affinities with the Pythia's utterances. But actually his extant works contain no direct mention of the Pythian Apollo as a source of prophecies. Delphi simply appears as the place where the stone swallowed by Cronos and later disgorged, is preserved and revered. Hence there would, so far as one can tell, be no actual inconsistency if Hesiod or the members of his epic school had on occasion praised Dodona at the expense of Delphi.²

It is possible also that we can trace in archaic Greek literature Delphi's reaction to the challenge of Dodona. In Homer the conception of the will of Zeus as superior in purpose to all the other gods was frequently asserted. This raised certain difficulties about the relations of Zeus and fate which could not be readily resolved. But in representing the will of Zeus as generally supreme Homer did not give Apollo any special place as conveying his purposes to men.³ The Delphic oracle is once represented in the *Odyssey* as consulted by Agamemnon just as the oracle of Dodona might have been consulted by Odysseus or the suitors. But there is no attempt to explain the relations of Zeus and Apollo in matters of prophecy. Instead if Zeus wants to convey his wishes to the heroes he either sends omens or despatches Iris or Hermes as a direct spokesman. This picture of the Olympian theocracy is no doubt not simply a naive reflection of popular belief, but a deliberate composition framed on the lines of epic convention. Still it is significant that already in the *Homeric Hymns* a somewhat different version is suggested. In the Delphic half of the *Hymn to Apollo* we have a panegyric of the god's foundation of the Pythian sanctuary with deliberate stress at times on the fact that it is to be an oracle-centre for all mankind. Relations with Zeus are not mentioned: for them we have to turn to the Delian half of the poem, where the infant Apollo, immediately after his birth, bursts from his swaddling clothes and cries: 'May the harp and the bending bow be my delight, and I shall prophesy to men the unerring will of Zeus.' This statement of Apollo's function may probably have been drawn up for the sanctuary of Delos, but there are clear indications that it was also adopted by Delphi, and one may well suppose that this was at least partly because it was the only satisfactory

reply to anyone who argued that the Pythia was only the mouth-piece of Apollo while at Dodona Zeus himself, the supreme god, gave his judgements.

The dogma is next found in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* where the crafty god addresses Apollo with appropriate flattery: 'You sit, son of Zeus, as first among the immortals, fine and strong, and Zeus loves you in all holiness and has supplied you with goodly gifts. For they say that you learn from Zeus's voice the honours and oracles, all the prophecies from Zeus.' Apollo in the *Hymn* is not precisely identified as Pythian, but in view of the long and curious digression about the Thriai of Mount Parnassos, it is evident that it was produced in close association with Delphi.

The statement that the Pythian Apollo is the spokesman of Zeus cannot be traced again in the limited fragments of Greek literature which are extant before fifth-century tragedy, but in Aeschylus and Sophocles it is an established idea, which finds its most frequent and majestic expression in the *Eumenides*. There for instance the Pythia in her prayer (which is the perfect utterance of Delphic theology) ends her account of Apollo's accession to the oracle with the words 'Zeus has framed a mind inspired with mantic skill within him and has seated him as the fourth prophet on this throne, and Loxias is the spokesman of his father, Zeus.' It was the object of the Delphic priesthood to have this doctrine accepted throughout Greece, and the frequency with which it is expressed in Pindar and the Attic tragedians is a measure of their success, just as these poets were the voluntary or involuntary evangelists of this belief. Dodona with its claim to direct inspiration from Zeus was Delphi's most important rival, but found it difficult to maintain itself against the extraordinary growth of the Pythia's influence in the seventh and sixth centuries.

The other fragment from Hesiod is a much slighter piece of evidence: 'he went to Dodona and the oak tree, a settlement of the Pelasgoi'.⁴ The original work it comes from is not known, nor the context, but it appears to describe someone going to Dodona presumably to consult the oracle, since the oak tree is mentioned. Strabo cites it to prove that the original inhabitants of Dodona were the Pelasgians, and it is certainly a much more positive statement in favour of that belief than Homer's vague use of the adjective 'Pelasgian' in Achilles' prayer. But the evidential value of a Hesiodic fragment on such a subject is hard to assess. Without

knowing the context we cannot judge whether it was set in some legendary period. Also it is difficult to decide whether the verse is independent evidence or simply an echo from Homer or from Homer's source which in the process of echoing has enlarged the sound. This is, as we shall see, a proceeding which has certainly taken place with the later stories of the Pelasgians at Dodona and it is hard to be sure that it had not already begun.

After Hesiod there is a long gap before another contemporary author who mentions the oracle at Dodona is encountered. Hecataeus, the first of the prose historians, may have described it.⁵ But our only quotation is the single clause: 'To the south of the Molossians dwell the Dodonaeans.' This can probably be taken as a geographical or ethnographical statement rather than a proof that Dodona at this period was politically independent of the Molossi.

In the fifth century the first references are in Aeschylus and come from the one play (*Prometheus Bound*). Io, the ill-starred object of Zeus' love, describes to Prometheus how she was tormented by frightening dreams:⁶ 'My father sent to Delphi and to Dodona frequent sacred embassies to learn by what deed or word he might act to please the gods. They kept returning and reporting back complexly worded oracles obscure and spoken so that they were hard to determine. But finally evident tidings came to Inachus enjoining him clearly and bidding to thrust me out of home and native country to wander at large to the bounds of the earth. If he refused, a flaming thunderbolt from Zeus would come and blot out all his race. Persuaded then by this form of prophecy from Apollo', Inachus expelled his daughter. The last clause seems to make it plain that Aeschylus pictured the final, straightforward oracle as coming from the Pythian Apollo, not from Dodona. As the whole story is a legend, the point is not of great importance. The significant fact is that Aeschylus when wishing to show a primitive king in heroic times consulting oracle-centres thought it appropriate to group Dodona with Delphi as the two outstanding sanctuaries. It is rare enough in Greek literature to find them linked in this fashion.⁷

Dodona also appears again in the same play. For Prometheus so as to demonstrate to Io that he could prophesy the final stages of her wanderings proceeds to describe correctly to her what she had already traversed. This includes a passage on Epirus.⁸ 'When

you came to the Molossian plains and round about steep-ridged Dodona, where are the oracles and seat of Thesprotian Zeus, and an unbelievable miracle, the talking oaks, by which clearly and with no riddles you were addressed as she who would be the famous spouse of Zeus.' Prometheus' description of the scene suggests one of those legendary instances which are a favourite device in Delphic mythology. The enquirer enters the sanctuary and, before he can utter an enquiry, the Pythia hails him in prophetic language, identifying him and foretelling his future. Also there is an implied contrast between this clear address and the riddling responses previously sent to Inachus.

The whole episode is quite probably Aeschylus' own invention, part of the elaboration with which he fills out the rather bald action of this play. Nothing in it need be derived from any more immediate sources than the epic traditions. The one difference from them, which may perhaps be put down to poetic licence, is that the single sacred oak of the *Odyssey* has become plural. This is not the usual picture of the sanctuary.

If we wish to find the evidence of a contemporary who had actually visited Dodona we have to go to Herodotus. Into his description of Egypt he introduces a long theological discussion which includes the version which he had heard of the origins of the oracle. The starting point is the question of the identity of the gods worshipped by the Greeks and the Egyptians. To Herodotus, who was a pious believer in the existence of divine powers (even if he was at times sceptical about human knowledge of them), it was at least one basic and unshakeable premise that the gods and goddesses of different countries were ultimately the same. There might be confusions over names and dates and the details of cult, but this did not alter the underlying identity. It was easy enough, of course, to produce simple equations between approximately similar deities. Amon-Ra was Zeus, Horus Apollo, Osiris Dionysus, and so forth. But to a man of Herodotus' critical faculty the difficulty arose when one compared the Egyptian claim to have known and worshipped these deities for tens of thousands of years and the ordinary Greek chronology which could scarcely be stretched to allow more than eleven or twelve centuries at most since the creation of man. The imposing appearance of the Egyptian temples and other monuments, their wealth of written records going back to primitive times and all the dignity of their traditions impressed

themselves on the early Greek enquirer, who could not well laugh it all away as fraudulent invention. But if a harmony was to be produced between Greek and Egyptian traditions, it could only rest on the admission that the Egyptians had long preceded the Greeks in their knowledge of the same gods whom they now worshipped under different names. This presupposition Herodotus was prepared to accept, and he had found support for the theory in statements made to him by the priestesses at Dodona.⁹

'The Pelasgians formerly made all their sacrifices with an invocation to "the gods", as I know through having heard it at Dodonæ, and they applied no title or name to any of them. For they had not heard their names.' (Herodotus is using his normal method in picturing that the original inhabitants of Dodona, just as of the rest of Greece, were Pelasgians. What may still to Homer have been a particular tribe of barbarians was to Herodotus the primitive substratum of all Hellas before the coming of the Hellenes.) Herodotus goes on to supply a derivation of the word for 'Gods' (*theoi*) from the verb 'to place' (*thentes*) on the ground that they had 'placed in order all things and all activities, and maintained them. After a long time had elapsed they heard from Egypt the names of the other gods which had come from there, but the name of Dionysus they heard much later, and after an interval they enquired of the oracle at Dodona about the names. For that oracle-centre is accepted as the oldest of the places of prophecy among the Greeks and at that time it was the only one. When then the Pelasgians enquired at Dodona whether they should adopt the names that had come from the barbarians, the oracle gave the response that they should use them and from that time they sacrificed using the names of the gods, and the Hellenes received them later from the Pelasgians.'

Herodotus emphasizes that this is the account which he was told by the priestesses of Dodona, and supports it with his own view that Homer and Hesiod, not more than four hundred years before his time, had created their theogonies for the Greeks. He goes on, then, to amplify this curious picture of a Greek priesthood claiming to have derived its theology from Egypt by attributing an Egyptian origin to the oracle of Dodona itself: 'About the oracle-centres among the Greeks and in Libya the Egyptians give the following account. The priests of Zeus at Thebes said that two women, priestesses, were carried off from Egyptian Thebes by

Phoenicians, and they heard that one of them was sold to Libya and the other to the Greeks. It was these women, they said, who first founded the places of prophecy among these two peoples. When I asked them how they knew the story so precisely, they said in reply that they had instituted a great search for these women, and were unable to find them, but heard later the facts about them which they told. Such was what I heard from the priests at Thebes, and the following I was told by the prophetesses of the Dodonaeans: that two black doves flew from Egyptian Thebes, and the one of them arrived in Libya and the other with them. It sat on an oak and spoke with a human voice that it was fated for an oracle-centre of Zeus to be set up there, and the Dodonaeans regarded the message given them as divine and acted accordingly. The other dove, they say, which went away to Libya, bade the Libyans make a place of prophecy in honour of Ammon: it also is dedicated to Zeus. The priestesses of the Dodonaeans, of whom the eldest is named Promeneia, the next in order Timarete, and the youngest Nicandre, told these things, and the others, the men of Dodona attached to the sanctuary, were in agreement with them.'

Herodotus evidently regarded this statement as a highly important revelation, as is shown by the careful way in which he introduces it and the precision with which he records at the end the names of the three priestesses. It is interesting also to notice that he had clearly not been content to let the subject rest at that point, but had pursued further enquiries with the other officials there until he was satisfied that he had been given the authentic tradition.

Herodotus ends by offering his own interpretation. When faced with the two parallel, but alternative versions of a pair of priestesses or a pair of doves as the founders of two great oracle-centres, his simple rationalism would not let him choose the more picturesque and fanciful story. Also, however, his critical feeling would not go so far as to make him reject both as legendary inventions. He produced a neat enough harmonization of the two myths.

'I for my part hold this opinion about them. If truly the Phoenicians led off the sacred women and sold one of them in Libya and the other in Greece, it seems to me that this latter one of them was sold into slavery in Thesprotia, now part of Greece, but formerly called Pelasgia. Then as she was a slave there she

established a sanctuary of Zeus under an oak tree that grew there, as was natural for one who had served at Thebes in the temple of Zeus to recall it where she had arrived. Subsequently she explained the oracle-centre after she had grasped the Greek tongue. They say also that her sister was sold as a slave in Libya by the same Phoenicians by whom she had been sold. As for the doves it seems to me that the women were called doves by the Dodonaeans because they were barbarians, and they seemed to them to make sounds like birds. Later, as they say, the dove spoke with a human voice after the woman talked intelligibly. So long as she talked barbarously, she seemed to them to make sounds like a bird, for in what way would a dove make the sound of a human voice? In saying that the dove was black they indicate that the woman was Egyptian. The method of the oracles in Egyptian Thebes and at Dodona happens to be similar to each other. Divination from sacrifices also has come from Egypt.'

This portion of Herodotus' history is one of our most important documents on Dodona, and it can be used to establish various points both positive and negative. First of all, if this account is compared with the brief Homeric references a great change is seen to have taken place. The Selloi have dropped completely out of the picture and their place has been taken by three female prophetesses. Even if we are to suppose that Herodotus' reference to 'the men of Dodona attached to the sanctuary' conceals the still surviving Selloi, their prestige must have largely fallen, and, though arguments from silence are dangerous, it is hard to believe that, if they were still maintaining their curiously unhellenic customs of unwashenness and hard lying, Herodotus, that enquirer of universal curiosity, would not have given them a mention. That they should have already ceased to function is not entirely surprising. We saw already that evidently by the time when the Alexandrian commentators were trying to interpret the *Iliad* the custom must have been long dead, or they would have had some better information on it. Herodotus' description serves to show that the great change must have taken place at least by the mid-fifth century.

If Herodotus' account shows that the *Iliad's* picture was quite out of date, the references in the *Odyssey* also do not seem to fit very well. There has been a great shift of emphasis. In the *Odyssey* the main feature of the oracle-centre was the speaking oak:

whether its interpreters were men or women was left vague. In Herodotus the stress is much more on the human agents, as is perhaps natural when they were the sources of his information, but the sacred oak of Zeus has sunk to be just 'an oak' on which a dove settled marking the site of the future oracle, and though the reference to the establishment of the oracle might again cover the development that the tree spoke prophecies, it does not seem at all likely. If Herodotus found it too hard to believe that a dove could speak with a human voice, what would have been his feelings when faced with the statement that an oak talked? It certainly looks as though by his day the practice of obtaining oracles from the oak was as out of date as the ritual customs of the Selloi.

We are left, then, with Herodotus' own account of three priestesses and of an oracle established by a dove. Here again a curious omission may be noticed. Herodotus, as we saw, was at considerable pains to explain away the possibility that the dove who founded the oracle could have spoken with a human voice, and he took it that this could be accounted for by supposing that it could be identified with an Egyptian priestess, first talking her native speech and later learning to speak Greek. But he never considers the possibility that the oracle of Dodona had generally been conducted by means of doves, yet this story is very frequent in antiquity. Evidently if the oracle in Herodotus' day had used doves in its methods of divination, it would have been a point which he would have had to have taken into account in his hypothesis. Instead he states at the end of his narrative that the methods used in the oracle-centres of Amon-Ra at Egyptian Thebes and of Zeus at Dodona are similar. The wording is slightly vague, and obviously could cover a certain amount of local variation, but does suggest that at least broadly speaking they were alike. Herodotus who had been in both places could scarcely have made such a statement if the chief method of divination at Dodona in his day had been by means of a talking oak or a prophetic dove, for the independent evidence from Egypt is such as to show that nothing like this was practised there. Instead the Egyptian method approximated to a form of drawing lots.¹⁰

Before we follow up this question further, it is best to discuss some other points that arise out of Herodotus' description. The whole subject, as we saw, was introduced into his history as part of an investigation of the origin of the Greek gods, and his conclusion

is that they were originally nameless, but that their names were brought from Egypt where they had long been in use for the native Egyptian deities. In arguing this theory he is concerned entirely with theology, not with philology. When he mentions the 'names' of the gods what he really means is their individual identities and characteristics, and it is typical of ancient Greek that he should express himself in this way. He did not, of course, suppose for instance that 'Zeus' as a name was derived from 'Amon-Ra', but rather that the Egyptians' knowledge of the god was the foundation for the Greek knowledge of him. This is a theory in which modern scholars would not follow Herodotus, but at least one must recognize that he was prepared to put in much serious work on investigating the subject. In fact it is the only field of research in which he positively states that he made a journey for the sake of following up a likely clue. As he explains elsewhere,¹¹ since he had heard that there was a specially ancient temple of Heracles in Tyre, he went there (probably from Egypt) so as to investigate the origins of Heracles' divinity. In view of this analogy we may wonder whether Herodotus' journey to Dodona was deliberately undertaken for theological enquiry. It was an out-of-the-way place, and even in Herodotus' day it is unlikely that he found occasion to pass through it on the way to some other destination. Also it is noticeable that he does not linger to describe anything about the place, its local marvels or its past history, except in so far as it concerned his one special subject.

If, then, Herodotus probably went to Dodona especially to enquire about early theology, it must have been on the basis of some previous intimation. Either he had already visited Egypt and in view of the statement by the priests at Thebes about the origins of the oracles of Ammon and Dodona, he felt he should pursue the matter further with local investigations, or else he had found an indication in some literary source which put him on the track. The form of his discussion in book two does not give any positive indication whether he had visited Egypt before Dodona or vice versa. Only in his interview with the priests of Amon-Ra he seems to have been sufficiently ready for their story to be able to respond at once with a question how they had acquired their precise information.

Apart from the possibility that the story of the common origin of Ammon and Dodona was contained in some entirely lost source—for instance, some unquoted passage of Hecataeus' works—there

was apparently one author who had already mentioned it, and this was Pindar. At least the scholiast on Sophocles, *Trachiniae*,¹² when explaining a reference to doves at Dodona (which we must later consider) quotes Herodotus on the possible derivation from the Egyptian priestesses of foreign speech, refers to the fact that Euripides said there were three of them and ends: 'others say two, and that one of them came from Thebes to the oracle of Ammon and the other to the neighbourhood of Dodona, as also Pindar in the Paeans'. If this ancient commentator is to be trusted (and he paraphrases Herodotus accurately), then Pindar in one of his Paeans must have reproduced the same story as Herodotus in as far as it concerned two doves, or two women coming from Thebes to found the oracles of Zeus in these two places. Elsewhere there are quoted several brief fragments of what is more often described as a hymn by Pindar addressed to Zeus of Dodona: 'Helloi' for 'Selloi', 'Thesprotian Dodona' and what must be the first two lines of the poem: 'Dodonaean Father, mighty of strength, the best in skill.'¹³ Our authorities do not state who had commissioned the work. In view of the close connections between Boeotia and the oracle it is perhaps most probable that it was Pindar's own native town of Boeotian Thebes. If so, he may have made some effective use of the myth that the founder of the Dodonaean oracle came from the city of the same name in Egypt.

Pindar had also personal reasons to be interested in Dodona. He was a *proxenus* of the Molossians—a fact which emerges in the seventh Nemean ode where he apologizes for offence which he may have caused to the inhabitants of Epirus by the way in which he had referred to the death at Delphi of their local hero, Neoptolemus. This unfortunate passage had occurred in the sixth Paean composed for the Delphians about 490 B.C.; so evidently already in his early thirties at most Pindar had acquired the position of being the representative of the Molossi at Thebes. It may have been a hereditary distinction. Boeotia and Dodona appear to have had connections from primitive times.¹⁴ Also the legend may have had a special appeal to him in another way in that he had a certain devotion to Zeus Ammon, as we shall see. Anyway, if, as seems evident, Pindar mentioned the legend, he may well have been the first Greek to record it. For though his hymn cannot be dated, it is likely to have been produced a number of years before Herodotus first published his history (about 445 B.C.).

If Herodotus, then, borrowed from a reference in Pindar the notion of investigating Thebes and Dodona for the early history of Greek religion, it would be quite in his usual manner not to feel obliged to pay acknowledgements. Anyway he had carried the matter much further by enquiries on the spot and had produced a plausible explanation. (It is not quite clear from the scholiasts' allusion, whether Pindar had made the travellers from Egypt women or birds.) It suited Herodotus' attitude of approval towards the Egyptian claims to high antiquity that he could find both in Thebes and in Dodona confirmation that the Egyptian religion was more venerable in age than the Greek and had been its original source. In so far as the legend also stressed the antiquity of Dodona relative to all other Greek oracles we can see why it would appeal to the priestesses. According to it, Dodona existed as an oracle before the primitive inhabitants of Greece had yet adopted names for their gods. In fact it was the only oracle in Greece at that early date. It had authorized the Greek pantheon by approving the adoption of the names which came from Egypt. It may even have been through the priestess at Dodona (who had been brought as a slave from Egypt) that the knowledge of these names had first been spread in Greece, though this point is left unclear by Herodotus.

All this picture of Dodona as the source of Greek religion was naturally designed to redound to the prestige of the oracle. But the fact that in the process Zeus Ammon was put on a similar footing of antiquity and still more that all precedence was ultimately given to Egyptian Thebes may strike one with surprise. One can only suppose that the Dodonaean priesthood, while certainly interested in maintaining their priority in the face of their rival, Delphi, felt no such hostility towards Egyptian Thebes. The history of Ammon in this connection can be discussed later and also an interesting example of the horned head of Zeus Ammon found at Dodona. Meanwhile it is well to look briefly at the remaining references to Dodona in fifth-century Attic literature.

Sophocles built two of his tragedies to a large extent round a motivation provided by responses from Dodona. One, the *Trachiniae*, is extant; the other, the *Odysseus Akanthoplex*, is lost, but a few significant fragments have survived. In the *Trachiniae* the prophecies are used from beginning to end as a means of creating the atmosphere of an overpowering fate which neither Deianeira nor

Heracles can escape. The heroine in the prologue already refers to a tablet which Heracles has left with her when he had departed on his latest labour fifteen months before. It evidently contains some message which adds to her anxiety. In a dialogue with her son Hyllus she indicates that the message left with her was a prophecy that at this time Heracles would either meet his death or else, having achieved his task, have peace for the rest of his days. Even up to this point the origin of the prophecy has not been explained, but Sophocles has allowed information about it to filter out gradually and keep the audience in suspense. At last when the chorus on entering have delivered their first ode, Deianeira tells them explicitly: 'When Heracles my lord was going from home on his last journey he left in the house an ancient tablet, inscribed with tokens which he had never brought himself to explain to me before . . . but now as if he were a doomed man . . . he fixed the time; saying that, when a year and three months should have passed since he had left the country, then he was fated to die: or, if he should survive that term, to live thenceforth an untroubled life. Such, he said, was the doom ordained by the gods to be accomplished in the toils of Heracles: as the ancient oak at Dodona had spoken once by the mouth of the two Peleïades.'¹⁵ Having thus created the dramatic tension while unfolding the character of Deianeira, Sophocles develops the interplay of personalities between her, Heracles, and Iole, his new love. When at last the mortally injured Heracles appears, almost at the end of his final scene, he ties up the threads by linking another oracle with that already quoted. 'It was foreshown to me by my father (Zeus) of old that I should perish by no creature that had the breath of life but by one that had passed to dwell in Hades. So I have been slain by this savage centaur, the living by the dead, even as the divine will had been foretold. And I will show thee how later oracles tally therewith confirming the old prophecy. I wrote them down in the grove of the Selli, dwellers on the hills, whose couch is on the ground; they were given by my father's oak of many tongues: which said that at the time which liveth and now is my release from my toils laid upon me should be accomplished. And I looked for prosperous days; but the meaning, it seems, was only that I should die; for toil comes no more to the dead.'¹⁶

This is the first Greek tragedy in which the oracle of Dodona in this way is made to play a central role. The references in the

Prometheus Bound were incidental only, and Delphi even then was given the credit of initiating one episode in the dramatic action. But here no other oracle except Dodona is named. It is left vague whether it was responsible for both prophecies. The forecast that Heracles would not die by a living creature is simply said to have been 'revealed by Zeus' which could most simply mean at Dodona, but might of course be applied loosely to oracles given by Apollo as Zeus' mouthpiece. This particular response is never mentioned elsewhere and was possibly Sophocles' own invention, intended to strengthen this last statement of Heracles which might have seemed weak and repetitious if he had simply referred again to the prophecy already mentioned several times in the play. This second forecast of the end of his labours does not occur in this exact form in other authors, but Diodorus Siculus and Apollodorus both knew two versions of a Delphic oracle that Heracles would achieve immortality either after twelve labours or after twelve years and ten labours.¹⁷ Also Sophocles knew this latter version or something like it, for he once makes the chorus in an ode sing 'See, maidens, how suddenly the divine word of the old prophecy has come upon us, which said that, when the twelfth year should have been through its full tale of months, it should end the series of toils for the true-born son of Zeus'.¹⁸ Modern commentators have reasonably been rather worried by the inconsistency. For Deianeira had never told the chorus of any interval except fifteen months from Heracles' last departure. Jebb was probably wise in not lingering over what he described as 'this inconsistency of detail . . . overlooked by the poet'. It does, however, as he sees, imply the previous existence of the 'twelve year' prophecy in the epic story. Does this mean also that the oracle had previously been attributed to Delphi, and that Sophocles in altering the point of reference also altered the place of consultation?

It is easy to conjecture that Sophocles found it more dramatic to represent Deianeira as reaching a relatively sudden pitch of anxiety at the end of fifteen months' absence rather than knowing for twelve years of her married life that the crisis would come at this point. It may have been for some such motive that Sophocles chose to reshape the terms of the oracle. Why he should choose Dodona rather than Delphi, if he did, is less easy to guess. Unfortunately the date of the production of the *Trachiniae* is quite uncertain. Opinion now tends to put it earlier rather than later in

the poet's development.¹⁹ If it were datable to the early years of the Peloponnesian war, when Euripides shows a distinct hostility to the Pythian Apollo, one might wonder if the more balanced Sophocles had also felt a wish to give credit for prophecy to some other centre than Delphi. But this is very doubtful. Perhaps instead there is some dramatic motive. The Heracles of the play is curiously inhuman and savage, as commentators have remarked. Hence it may have been more appropriate that the mainsprings of his action should not come from Delphi, familiar to many of the Athenian audience, but rather from Dodona, strange and outlandish as it probably seemed. Certainly Sophocles takes occasion somewhat to stress this aspect in his allusions.

In the final passage where Heracles is speaking he produces a description which might have been derived entirely from Homer. The many-tongued oak of Zeus is provided by the *Odyssey*. The 'Selloi whose couch is on the ground' are a paraphrase of Achilles' prayer in the *Iliad*. Neither reference need imply any independent knowledge.

Deianeira's account of Dodona, though avowedly derived from Heracles, is noticeably different in tone. It is the ancient oak once more that has spoken the prophecy, but this time there is no mention of the Selloi. Instead the oracle is described in a rather obscure phrase as 'from the twin doves (Peleiades)'. This could be interpreted, as Jebb suggested,²⁰ in at least three ways: (1) either 'by the agency of two doves', meaning literally that the oracle was in some way produced by sounds from the tree and indications, whether by cries or by flight, from these birds; or (2) 'from between two doves', meaning that the oak tree was associated with figures of doves, presumably of stone or metal, placed on each side of it; or (3) 'by the mouth of the two dove-priestesses'. In much later times, for instance, in the second century A.D., the word 'peleias' was certainly used not only for 'dove', but also as a title for the women who acted as prophetesses at Dodona, and when we come to discuss the subject, we can trace echoes of the usage back through Strabo's explanation of the word as really derived from a Molossian word for 'old woman' to the legend in Herodotus of the dove with the human voice. Whether this was what Sophocles literally intended it is difficult to be sure. He may have meant to say, as Jebb translates, 'at the mouth of the two Peleiades' meaning that the priestesses spoke the oracle of Zeus

which the oak tree had indicated by sounds to them. Or he may have wished to use a vague phrase which by its ambiguity allowed the hearer also to take the more obscure meaning that the oracle had been conveyed by birds.²¹

Modern scholars have noticed that in some ways one feels in this passage that Sophocles has come down from the period of Homer to that of Herodotus, and it is well known that the two contemporaries were acquainted and that Sophocles' poetry in a number of places shows a curious degree of indebtedness to the historian. But apart from the general tone, when we examine details the resemblances in this instance are not so great that we need suppose that Sophocles derived this passage from Herodotus, Book II.²² There, as we saw, the oak was not mentioned as a prophetic source as such, and the prophetesses were three in number, and though their archetype, the Egyptian priestess, was identified by Herodotus with a dove, he gave no indication that the term was ordinarily used as a title for the contemporary priestesses. So Sophocles' source was probably different. He, too, as we have suggested with Herodotus, may owe a debt to Pindar's lost paean. What became to Herodotus an impulse to research suggested to Sophocles a new form of poetic expression.

Sophocles also mentioned the priestesses of Dodona in his lost play 'Odysseus struck by the sting-ray'. We have preserved the single line 'the prophetic priestesses of Dodona';²³ which unfortunately does not prove that Sophocles could also call them Peleiades, but at least it shows that he could picture the oracle as conducted by women. The play, like the *Trachiniae*, turned on an oracular response. Odysseus after returning from his wanderings received a prophecy that he would die by the hand of his son, and with a typical equivocation this did not mean Telemachus but Telegonus, his son by Circe, who arrived unrecognized and killed his father without having identified him. Three other single lines mentioning Dodona are also preserved,²⁴ and no doubt Pearson is right therefore in supposing that in Sophocles' play at least the prophecy came from that oracle-centre, while elsewhere no source is named. Also in a way typical of Sophocles, and well exemplified by the *Oedipus Rex*, the action was evidently developed so that up to a certain point it seemed clear that the oracle had been proved completely false. Odysseus had been smitten, not by Telemachus, but by a stranger. Then a sudden recognition of

Telegonus brought about the tragic *peripeteia*. It is from this earlier stage of the play before the recognition-scene that we have such lines as: 'Now no one from Dodona nor from the clefts of Delphi would persuade me' and 'Make the god at Dodona to lose his praises'. These sceptical and abusive remarks were evidently, like some in the *Oedipus Rex*, refuted by the end of the play.

In the *Trachiniae* one was inclined to ask why Dodona, rather than Delphi had been chosen as the appropriate source of the prophecies which motivated the play. In the *Odysseus Acanthoplex* the same query does not arise. After the references to Dodona in the *Odyssey* it was the obvious oracle-centre to choose. So the play and its fragments do not add to our knowledge of the subject, except in so far as it illustrates Sophocles' acquaintance with the institution of prophetesses there.²⁵

If we return to the problem of the prophetic doves and try to follow this tradition down through classical authors we have seen that Herodotus appears only to know of the bird at Dodona as occurring in a local legend that the oracle was founded by a dove from Egyptian Thebes. He does not picture the dove as regularly giving oracular responses, and in fact he manages to explain it away as a metaphorical description of the Egyptian woman whom he finds performing the same function in Egyptian legend. On the contrary his contemporary Sophocles in an obscure phrase derives an oracular response from the twin doves as well as the oak tree. After these two fifth-century authors no references to the dove occur until the first century B.C. when it is something in the far past. But Dionysius of Halicarnassus evidently believed that the bird had given responses. In describing the methods of an oracle of Mars at Tiora Matiene in the district of Reate in central Italy, he uses it as an analogy. 'Its method was like that which they say once occurred at the legendary oracle among the Dodonaeans; except that there a dove sitting on the sacred oak tree was said to prophecy, while among the Aborigines the bird sent by the god was what they themselves call a woodpecker'.²⁶ The analogy is significant for Dionysius because he is following out the legends which derived the only inhabitants of Italy from the Greek mainland, and represents them as actually consulting Dodona. But this is not in itself any reason to doubt that he is reproducing correctly enough a tradition of his day that the dove had been the source of the oracles.

Strabo evidently knew the same, but unfortunately does not choose to go into it in detail. As he remarks, 'the legends that are told about the oak tree and the doves and that kind of subject, just as those about Delphi, are some of them more suitable to poetic handling and others appropriate to the present geographical description'.²⁷ What he thought appropriate to his subject were the rationalistic explanations offered by scholars. He quoted two:—that the doves did not talk, but 'perhaps there was something exceptional about the flight of the three pigeons from which the priestesses were wont to make observations and prophesy'; or alternatively that 'they say in the dialect of the Molossians and the Thespotians old women are called "peliai" and old men "pelioi", and perhaps the much talked of Peleïades were not birds, but three old women who busied themselves about the temple'.²⁸

Here we see in another form the same activity as that of Herodotus. He could explain away the black dove from Egyptian Thebes as a dark-skinned foreigner talking an unintelligible language. The Hellenistic scholars instead explain that the so-called 'doves' are not doves, because the word used to describe them was simply a dialect expression meaning 'old women'. Without independent evidence to confirm the existence of this word, one might have regarded it with grave suspicion. It looks like a scholarly fiction invented to cover over the awkward irrationalities of folk-myth. But actually in the ancient grammarians and lexicographers there are several references to words of similar form defined as meaning 'old man', and there is no reason to doubt, as is suggested in the latest edition of Liddell and Scott, that they are derived from a vague word for colour, such as is represented by *palleo* and *pallidus* in Latin. The 'grey ones' of these dialects were the aged men; and the word for 'dove' no doubt came from the same root, meaning 'the grey bird'. Hence it is inevitable that an analogy can be drawn between the words for 'dove' and 'old woman'. The bird in Greek was normally feminine in gender; so a woman, and not a man, would be suggested.

But even if philologically the theory cannot be ruled out as impossible, it still remains very improbable. One can scarcely believe that, if doves as such had no connection with Dodona, the fact that the oracle was conducted by elderly priestesses would have sufficed of itself to generate the legend that it was founded by a dove speaking from the oak. We have seen that doves were

primitively associated with Zeus, and for doves to nest in the hollows of an ancient oak would be entirely to be expected. Also if they lived in the sacred tree of Zeus, they were no doubt sacred, too. If it prophesied, so might they. If the swaying and creaking of the oak tree spoke to the prophets, so might the calls and flight of the doves. There are few European birds whose voices are more strongly suggestive at times of human speech.

But if the priestesses, too, could be called 'doves', it is not so likely to be because they were old women and the two words could be confused, but because by being called 'doves' they were being associated with Zeus as his consecrated servants, and prophets. Clear evidence for such a usage in early times at Dodona cannot be found. Sophocles is at least somewhat ambiguous. Strabo treats the practice as hypothetical. The doves might have been old women who busied themselves about the temple, but he does not state clearly that such old women were called 'doves'.

Later writers are more positive, but their assurance may not be any more convincing. Pausanias knew of prophecies in hexameter verse attested by the Peleiai of Dodona and treats them without question as women similar to other female prophets.²⁹ Hesychius gives as the two alternative meanings of the noun Peleiai:¹ doves,² the prophesying priestesses at Dodona.³⁰ In the Servian commentaries on Vergil various explanations occur.³¹ Sometimes the doves prophesy as birds. Once a new etymology is proposed 'This was invented because in the Thessalian language Peleïades means both doves and prophetesses'. In a long passage of Servian commentary on Vergil, *Aeneid*, 3, 466, an entirely new version of the explanation is given: 'this region is in the territory of the Aetolians where a temple had been consecrated by the ancients to Juppiter and Venus. By this temple there is said to have been a large oak tree, from whose roots a fountain used to flow which by its murmur through the inspiration of the gods used to deliver oracles. These murmurs an old woman, by name Pelias, interpreted and expounded to men. But when this order of oracles had stood for many ages, the oak was commanded to be cut down by Arces, an Illyrian bandit. The result of this was that the prophetic murmurs ceased thereafter.' The commentary goes on to offer an alternative legend. 'Juppiter once upon a time assigned to his daughter Hebe two doves which spoke with a human voice, of which one flew into the acorn-bearing forest of Dodona and

settled there on the highest tree, and advised the man who at that time was cutting it to remove his sacrilegious blade from the consecrated oak. There an oracle of Zeus was established. . . . The other dove, however, reached Libya and there sat on top of the head of a ram and advised them that an oracle of Juppiter Ammon should be established.'

The second of these two legends is a curious re-hash of Herodotus' story of the two doves and the primitive legend of Hellos, the wood-cutter. It adds nothing of value to the history of Dodona, unless the connection of the doves with Hebe. The first of the legends contains a number of unusual points and one which is unique—the attribution of a method of prophecy by the sound of running water to Dodona. Some features of the account are unsatisfactorily distorted. Dodona was not in the territory of Aetolia, though fairly near it geographically. The temple, however, was dedicated to a female deity in conjunction with Zeus, though to describe her as Venus rather than Dione is distinctly misleading. The sanctuary was sacked by an Aetolian general in the late third century B.C. and perhaps by Thracians in the first century. But the Illyrian bandit, Arces, is at best unidentifiable.³²

Hence tested on what we know better of Dodonaean history, the Servian commentary seems to preserve at most very distorted echoes of the tradition. The spring with prophetic murmurs is not mentioned elsewhere, but may have had some connection with fact to the extent that in the Roman period there were stories of a famous spring at Dodona. It first appears clearly in Mela, but may also be described, though without a place name, in Lucretius, and it reappears again in Pliny's *Natural History* and in Solinus.³³ Its special feature was that though 'the water was cold and, like other fountains, extinguishes torches when they are plunged in it, when they are brought near it without fire it lights them'. Mela says that the fountain was regarded as sacred on that account, but neither he nor the other authors make any suggestion that it was used for divination.

No fountain with these remarkable characteristics can be found at Dodona nowadays and there can never have been a spring of any importance in the precinct. If it was to have any foundation in fact, one might imagine a well with some admixture of natural petroleum in which torches could be extinguished by complete immersion, but if a film of oil on the surface were lit it would serve

to re-ignite the torch when held above it. The account in Mela or Pliny has to be distorted somewhat to produce this effect, but a natural marvel on these lines would not be impossible. Also, curiously enough, though Dodona is not in an oil-bearing region, it is not very far south of the district of Apollonia where in classical times there were natural oil-wells which ignited.³⁴ Can the priests of Dodona have borrowed an idea for a miraculous well from phenomena known to them in the district farther north?

In still later times the well at Dodona must have changed its behaviour. At least the *Etymologicum Magnum*,³⁵ under the heading 'water which takes a holiday', records 'a spring in Dodona, because the water which it has does not flow always, but at midday and midnight slacks off and ceases to flow; at other hours it comes constantly'. Again there is no suggestion of anything except a natural marvel, and no hint that it could be used for divination. In fact the very regularity of the spring, fixed by midday and midnight, would not suit with the taking of particular omens by its behaviour.

The only support which modern scholars have found for the existence of a prophetic spring at Dodona is in the title of Zeus which seems to be special to the place. In rare literary contexts and in many local inscriptions he is called Zeus Naïos, which is most usually explained as derived from the Greek verb 'to flow' and is supposed to refer to him as a god of flowing water.³⁶ The etymology and its application are probably correct, but it does not follow that the streams had any prophetic power. Quite apart from the somewhat mythical springs which we have been considering, the neighbourhood of Dodona had a famous reputation for the abundance of its fountains.³⁷ Also the oracle itself was well known for propagating the cult of Acheloos, the primal river.³⁸ So there is no need to suppose the Zeus of flowing streams was other than a patron of the life-giving waters which are so comparatively rare and precious an object in the Greek landscape.

If we return to the Servian commentary, and agree to treat the reference to the divination by flowing water as dubious, the remainder of the passage casts little light on the oracle. 'The old woman, by name Pelias' seems to be a priestess called by the title of 'dove', but whether the Latin commentator understood this fact remains at least doubtful.

So after surveying the ancient evidence on the subject it would be roughly true to say that it tends to polarize in two directions.

It either concerns an actual bird (or birds) and represents it as initiating or continuing the oracle, and centres on primitive times; or else it concerns one or more priestesses bearing this title who do not appear to be otherwise concerned with doves in their divination, and who are shown more and more clearly as simply human, and not avian, the later the period. The most significant dividing point seems to come with Herodotus, who knows (and explains away) the use of a dove in the first sense as the bird-foundress of the oracle without betraying any inkling of the second sense. His near contemporary, Sophocles, on the other hand is the first to use an ambiguous phrase in which the prophetic doves may well be female prophetesses.

Before attempting to come to any conclusion on this issue it is best next to examine the evidence bearing on the origin of the priestesses at Dodona. We have seen that Homer in the *Iliad* referred with much circumstantial detail to male prophets, called Selloi. Then in the scanty trail of references down to the time of Herodotus' visit no evidence on this question is forthcoming. When Herodotus went to Dodona the oracle was conducted by the three women whom he names as prophetesses, and no Selloi are mentioned. A revolution in cult practice appears to have taken place between epic and classical times. But no tradition gives an ancient account or explanation of this great change until we come to Strabo.³⁹ He notes the difference in the institution between the time of Homer and Herodotus (without actually naming the latter) and explains that the three old women were appointed as priestesses from the time when Dione was established as sharing the temple with Zeus. It is an interesting statement, and might be accepted as the basis of a modern theory, if only there were some guarantee that it was founded on independent evidence, and not simply imagined as a hypothesis by some Hellenistic scholar. But it is not at all likely that there was any external source of information from which writers of Strabo's date could know that the cult of Dione had been established at Dodona in a post-homeric period. Nor is it likely that there was any sound tradition on the subject at Dodona itself. For as we shall see, we can trace to the fourth century B.C. and earlier a legend about the functioning of priestesses at Dodona, which would have supposed their presence there at a date very soon after the Trojan war.

It is much more likely that the alleged introduction of Dione is

a scholarly hypothesis and that, instead, as most modern scholars would suppose, she had been present at Dodona as Zeus's female consort since time immemorial. Our literary and epigraphic evidence certainly indicates that Dodona was the chief and almost the only centre of the worship of Dione. A somewhat late cult of the goddess on the Acropolis at Athens, one reference in Crete, and some scattered examples of the use of the name for deities in Asia Minor seem to be the only other instances known.⁴⁰ In literature Dione appears early; in Book Five of the *Iliad* where she is represented as the mother of Aphrodite present in Olympus and ready to comfort her daughter when she has been wounded by Diomedes.⁴¹ This association of Dione and Aphrodite was established as a literary tradition, but it is to be supposed that Homer brought her on the stage, not because of her importance as an object of worship, but because he needed someone to sympathize with Aphrodite who was not otherwise connected with the action. There is certainly nothing in all this material to suggest that the worship of Dione had existed at one time as something independent of Zeus and elsewhere than at Dodona, to which it had later come intrusively displacing his priesthood by a guild of female prophetesses.

Of course another possibility must be reckoned with. The cult of Dione might have been primeval at Dodona, but at some period in the dark ages it might have risen in importance from being subordinate to Zeus until in the end it was dominant enough to have dictated the sex of the chief officials in the temple. This is not exactly what Strabo says, but one might argue that it was a more correct description of what actually happened. However, here again one must observe that Herodotus, our first evidence for the priestesses, and a man who had actually interviewed them, treats Dodona as a shrine and oracle of Zeus, and never mentions Dione at all. Again the inscriptions from Dodona itself confirm this picture. They mention or are addressed to Zeus Naios, either alone or often in conjunction with Dione. But Zeus always leads, if both are mentioned, and it is very rare for Zeus to be omitted, and Dione named alone.

In conclusion, then, one must accept the evidence as showing no support for a post-homeric introduction of the cult of Dione, and no reason to suppose that the use of priestesses as prophetesses was connected with the cult of Dione or had resulted either from its introduction or its development.

There is, as we have said, a legend which can be traced quite early which shows the priestesses as already the normal officials to deal with oracular enquiries. Ephorus described how, in the period of migrations, two generations after the Trojan war, the Boeotians from Thessaly set out to return to their native land, which had been occupied by the Pelasgians.⁴² Both sides consulted the oracle at Dodona. Ephorus did not claim to know the response given to the Pelasgians, but to the Boeotians the prophetess announced that when they had committed impiety they would succeed. 'Their religious ambassadors', as Ephorus continued, 'suspected that the prophetess was favouring in this response the Pelasgians because of her kinship with them (for the sanctuary originally began as being Pelasgian.) So they seized the woman and cast her into the sacrificial fire with this thought in mind, that whether she was guilty of a crime or not, in either event it was rightly done. For if she had corrupted the oracle, then she had been punished; if she had committed no crime, then they had carried out her instructions. The temple authorities were not in favour of putting to death untried those who had done this deed, especially where they were in sanctuary. So they put them on trial, and summoned them before the priestesses. These were those prophetesses who survived of the original three. When the accused said that it was nowhere the custom for women to be judges, they chose in addition also men equal in number to the women. Then the men voted for acquittal, the women for condemnation, and as the votes were equal, those for acquittal prevailed. Thereafter to the Boeotians alone men [not women] give oracular responses at Dodona. The prophetesses, however, interpreted the oracle and said that the god commanded the Boeotians to plunder one of their own tripods and send it to Dodona each year; and indeed they do this thing. For they always take down by night one of the dedicated tripods and conceal it with garments, as though it were being taken covertly, and send it as an offering of a tripod to Dodona.'

This was Ephorus' version of the legend which is evidently a sophisticated story composed of various elements. A slightly different version can be traced back to another fourth-century author. Zenobius explains the proverbial saying 'May you act as prophet to the Boeotians' by describing it as imprecatory, and tells much the same story about the prophetess who advocated impiety and paid the penalty for it.⁴³ Only the enquirers are described as

the Thebans without any mention of the adversaries against whom they were at war. The prophetess's name is given as Myrtila, and instead of being thrown into a fire she is thrown into a cauldron of boiling water. Zenobius cites this from Heraclides, who is presumably the fourth-century philosopher of Heraclea in Pontus who wrote on such subjects as oracles. There is no sign whether he narrated either the story of the trial of the ambassadors or the interpretation of the oracle as a reason for the Tripodophoria. But since neither of these episodes would have helped to explain the proverb, Zenobius would in any event have been led to omit them. Proclus in the *Chrestomathy* included a very similar version to that of Ephorus, using it for the origin of the Tripodophoria, but describing the enquirers as Thebans and the war as a border dispute with the Pelasgians over Panactum.⁴⁴ Presumably, his source did not date it at the time of the original migrations but at the time pictured by Herodotus when the Pelasgians were resident in Attica and before their expulsion to Lemnos.

So we see this legend well established in a complicated form by the latter half of the fourth century. It may well have been known in some form at least a century earlier. At any rate, another of the proverb-writers of antiquity saw in it the explanation of an isolated phrase quoted from a lost play of Euripides. He cited the words 'ritual defilement of the oak tree'⁴⁵ from the *Erechtheus* of Euripides, and explains 'In a riddling reference to the offence of the Thebans against the oracle at Dodona. For they committed sacrilege against the priestess by casting her into the boiling cauldron at Dodona, when she had fallen in love with one of the sacred ambassadors.' In this very abbreviated version it is not quite clear whether we are dealing with the same legend. The motive of the oracular response advising sacrilege has been omitted, but may have left its trace in the reference to the act as sacrilegious. Again the mention of the priestess's romantic passion for one of the embassy seems to be an alternative explanation instead of the charge that she had misreported the oracle from political bias in favour of the Pelasgians. How it worked out in a full version of the story it is too difficult to conjecture. Also, of course, we have no real reason to suppose that this or any version of the legend was actually narrated in Euripides' tragedy. The commentator described the phrase as a 'riddling reference' and it is likely enough that Euripides introduced some indirect mention of the story without going

into detail, if the allusion was correctly understood. Erechtheus in the play evidently consulted the Delphic oracle, and not Dodona; so this and another allusion to the Selloi with unwashed feet may all have been given as reasons why their oracle centre should not be used for his enquiry.⁴⁶

Anyway, we can take this as proof that the legend of the priestess sacrilegiously killed was at least as old as the mid-fifth century, and was popularly known then, if Euripides could mention it allusively. By this date at least also the oracle of Dodona was conducted by women. The interesting point about the legend in this connection is that there is no implication that the priestesses are not a primitive institution. They date back, according to Ephorus, to the time of the migrations: if Euripides was not merely anachronistic in introducing them into the *Erechtheus* he pictured them as even preceding the Trojan war. It would have been possible to reconcile Ephorus and Homer by supposing that the establishment of the female priesthood took place in the two generations between the Trojan war and the Boeotian migration, but no such idea is likely to have been in the mind of Ephorus. The legend which he told seems to be compounded of at least three different elements: (1) a folk-tale in which the prophetess causes her own doom by her prophecy. This is a version of that favourite motive of the 'engineer hoist by his own petard' which recurs in various Greek legends. It is interesting to notice that Zenobius offers as an alternative explanation of the phrase a parallel version of the story which need not have any connection with Dodona. It runs: 'others say that when the Thebans were at war Bombos, the prophet, said that the majority would win the victory if they first offered in sacrifice one of their leaders: so they slew Bombos and were victorious'. The word used to describe Bombos' function would be correct for a prophet accompanying an ancient army on the field of battle, and the fact that they could treat him as one of the leaders seems to imply that this was his official position and that he was not speaking from an oracle-centre. The improbable name, Bombos, also suggests that this is not to be viewed as a historical incident, but as a folk-tale.

(2) A second element in the legend as told by Ephorus is the scene of the trial with two priestesses voting in favour of condemnation and two men voting for acquittal. Again it has the flavour of a popular story with its simple suggestion of the opposition between the sexes. In this particular context it is worked out as

the cause for a ritual practice—the Boeotian enquirers at Dodona were answered by man and not by women. But it is most unlikely that the legend gives the true explanation for this rule, nor is it likely to have been invented simply to explain it. It is a popular story which has been attracted to this context.

(3) The third element is an *aition* for the Theban rite of the Tripodophoria. No doubt the odd piece of ritual described is perfectly correct: that annually a tripod was sent from Thebes to Dodona and for this purpose was taken from one of the Theban sanctuaries (which is not specified). The act was performed as though surreptitiously. The tripod was taken out by night and was wrapped in garments. The procedure is curious and probably very primitive. The legend provides an ingenious explanation why the Thebans should behave as though they were committing an impiety. It is evidently only an aetiological legend, but it is good evidence for the custom.

In fact from Ephorus' story we can extract two pieces of ritual practice both of which are significant: the Tripodophoria and the rule about the sex of those who prophesied at Dodona to Boeotians. The first can be taken as evidence of an old and intimate connection between Thebes and the sanctuary of Zeus in Epirus. How it arose originally one cannot say. It might even have dated back to the period of the migrations in the dark ages of Greece. The other ritual rule has, also, an obvious air of being primitive. The reason for it given in the legend is plainly fanciful. The real cause is likely to be much simpler. As we have seen the Homeric evidence points to a time in the farther past when the prophets at Dodona had been male. In Herodotus' day they were female. The Boeotians evidently adhered to what had been the original practice, and this looks like a simple piece of religious conservatism. If, as the tripodophoria suggests, there had been old and intimate connections between them and Dodona, it is not surprising that, when a change came over the procedure of the oracle, the Boeotians persisted in adhering to the time-honoured methods, and in course of time this peculiar exception to a general rule received its own appropriate legend to explain it. If the Boeotians would not receive oracles from the women of Dodona, they must, as it was imagined, have had some quarrel with the members of that sex.

So from Ephorus' legend we get support for the idea that there had been a change from prophets to prophetesses some time in the

archaic period before the fifth century. But this seems to correspond at least approximately in date to some other changes in procedure which we have noted. The vehicle of prophecy in the *Odyssey* was an oak tree: in Herodotus the oak tree appears to have no practical function. Again doves are associated with the origin of the oracle, and perhaps with its working in primitive times, but to Herodotus they are solely something concerned in its past history, and even then metaphorically. This all would suit with the view that there had been a change or changes in the oracle's procedure in the archaic period, and that this fact need not be connected, as Strabo believed, with the introduction of the cult of Dione at Dodona.

The place of the male Selloi had been taken for normal purposes by prophetesses. The custom of the Thebans to receive responses to their enquiries through men remained as a primitive survival. The oak tree ceases to be mentioned as a source of prophecy unless in literary contexts derived directly or indirectly from Homer. The doves which appear to have been thought of as real birds even when they were imagined as speaking with human voices are replaced by prophetesses who can themselves come to be described as doves. The method of divination which they used in the time of Herodotus was one which he could compare to that of the Egyptian priesthood, and we shall see that the archaeological evidence from Dodona demonstrates that from late in the sixth century at least a method of consultation by means of lots was customary there.⁴⁷ We need not suppose that all these changes were simultaneous or that any of them need to have come otherwise than gradually. Perhaps the suppression of the Selloi was the earliest, for in classical times they had left no real tradition outside the reference in the *Iliad*. The decline of the oak may have been later and more gradual. It may have been occasioned by the actual decay of the sacred tree itself. As we have said, if it originally flourished before 1200 B.C. it would probably have reached a stage of complete decrepitude by the sixth century B.C., and this, apart from any other consideration might have forced on the priesthood a change of method.

With the decline of the oak might go the vanishing of the doves. Presumably at some point in the distant past they had chosen the tree as a nesting-place and had shared in its sanctity, but as the oak decayed they may have abandoned it for other quarters. The

priests may have replaced one sacred oak with another from the same stock, but it would be very plausible that in the transition period the oracular procedure of the tree would be superseded by another method. If Dodona needed to look for a model elsewhere, its great rival Delphi might have supplied the example. For certainly by the fourth century and probably as early as the sixth the Pythia had begun to answer some enquirers by the use of lots.⁴⁸ The exact procedure followed in the two sanctuaries was probably not identical. For Delphi has yielded none of the material traces found at Dodona. But it is likely that the method was imitated by one place from the other and on the whole Delphi is the most probable originator because there was a primitive tradition associating lots with Parnassus.⁴⁹

Also in the use of women to answer enquirers Dodona would be following in the steps of Delphi. Even the number of three prophetesses at one time as encountered by Herodotus is known from Plutarch to have been true of Delphi in the same period.⁵⁰

The tradition of the oak and the doves persisted locally, but probably it had ceased to bear any relation to oracular practice. The latest evidence for it, apart from literary allusions, is on an exceedingly rare bronze coin issued by the Epirote league about 300 B.C. This shows on the obverse an eagle standing on a rock and on the reverse an oak with branches holding leaves and acorns. One dove is sitting on the top looking right while two other doves are standing at the foot. P. R. Franke has recently called attention to the existence of two specimens of this coin, one in his own possession and the other in the National Museum at Athens, and has stressed its importance as evidence for the reality of doves as sacred objects at Dodona.⁵¹ He is perhaps going too far when he regards the coin as a proof of the mantic function of these birds. But taken in conjunction with our somewhat slender literary evidence, it provides useful support for the view that the doves were actual and were associated with the sacred oak.

NOTES

¹ Hes. fr. 134.

² Hesiod and the Delphic Oracle, Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 395 ff. His one reference to Delphi, *Th.* 499. cf. also fr. 123, 2.

³ On Apollo as the mouthpiece of Zeus, cf. Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 320 and note 2 with references.

⁴ Hes. fr. 212.

⁵ Hecataeus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 1 f. 168.

⁶ A. *Pr.* 657 ff.

⁷ For the only contemporary instance, cf. Hdt., 9, 93, 4, discussed at p. 134, *infra*.

⁸ A. *Pr.* 829 ff.

⁹ Hdt. 2, 52 ff.

¹⁰ Cf. *infra*, p. 195. For earlier unsuccessful attempts to explain this passage, cf. C. Sourdille, *Hérodote et la religion de l'Égypte* (Paris, 1910), 285 ff.

¹¹ Hdt. 2, 44.

¹² Sch. S. *Tr.* 170 (P. *fr.* 49 (Bowra)). See also the discussion by Jebb in his edition of the *Trachiniae*, p. 204.

¹³ Pi. *fr.* 259, 263 and 48 (Bowra).

¹⁴ Pi. *N.* 7, 64 with sch., and *Paean*, 6, 117. Cf. Wilamowitz, *Pindaros*, 165 ff. and P.W. s.n. Wilamowitz supposes that Pindar himself acquired the proxeny by his *Paean*, which would then have to be dated early in his career. For primitive connections between Thebes and Dodona (also noted by Wilamowitz) cf. *infra*, p. 71.

¹⁵ S. *Tr.* 46 ff., 70 ff., and 155 ff. (Jebb's translation).

¹⁶ S. *Tr.* 1159 ff.

¹⁷ Apollod. 2, 4, 12 and D.S. 4, 10.7 (Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, II, no. 442).

¹⁸ S. *Tr.* 821 with Jebb's comment. Kamerbeek's explanation in his commentary seems less satisfactory.

¹⁹ For the latest discussion, see Kamerbeek's commentary, pp. 27 ff. He groups the *Trachiniae* with the *Ajax* and *Antigone* and avoids any more precise dating. This would well allow for the play to have been produced before Herodotus' publication of his history, if this can be dated to 445 B.C. The *Antigone* (441 B.C.) contains a well-known passage (905 ff.) usually supposed to have been influenced by Herodotus' work.

²⁰ Jebb, appendix to his commentary, p. 205.

²¹ Recent translators decide in favour of the priestesses: e.g. Gilbert Murray (1947) 'So spake of old the Dove-Priestesses, reading the whisper of Dodona's tree'; Paul Mazon in the Budé edition (1953) 'par la voix de ses deux prêtresses'; Michael Jameson in the University of Chicago edition (1957) 'on the lips of the twin-Doves, the priestesses.' Also Kamerbeek explains it in this sense in a long note.

²² Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I², 424 treats Sophocles as entirely derived from Herodotus. This is rightly questioned by Kamerbeek.

²³ S. *fr.* 456 (Pearson).

²⁴ S. *fr.* 455, 460 and 461 (Pearson).

²⁵ Sophocles may also have introduced the oracle of Dodona into another of his lost plays, *Euryalus*, if its plot is represented by Parthenius, 3. There we are told how Odysseus, after the slaying of the suitors, εἰς Ἡπειρόν ἔλθων χρησθηρίων τινῶν ἕνεκα τὴν Τυρίμμα θυγατέρα ἔφθειρεν Εὐπίπτην ὃς αὐτὸν οἰκειῶς τε ὑπεδέξατο καὶ μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας ἐξένιξε. Does χρησθηρίων τινῶν ἕνεκα mean 'in fulfilment of certain oracles' or 'so as to enquire of some oracular shrine'? If the latter, then the oracle of Dodona may be intended, and Tyrimmas is perhaps to be thought of as being king of Thesprotia. Cf. Nilsson, *Studien*, p. 20.

²⁶ D.H. 1, 14, 5. Dionysius also knew of the tradition of the talking oak, cf. *supra*, p. 32, n. 20.

²⁷ Str. 7, 7, 10.

²⁸ Str. *Epitome*. (7, fr. 1a, Loeb).

²⁹ Paus. 10, 12, 10. Kern, *Religion*, I, 139, note 7, cites in this connection a papyrus scholion on Eur. *Ph.* 982.

³⁰ Hsch. s.v. πέλειαι.

³¹ For the doves prophesying as birds, Servius and Probus on Verg. *Ecl.* 9, 11; Servius and the *Brevis expositio* on Verg. *Geo.* 1, 149. Servius on Verg. *Ecl.* 9, 11 also gives the etymological explanation.

³² Cf. *infra*, p. 125 and p. 252, n. 25.

³³ Lucr. 6, 879; Mela, 2, 43; Plin. *HN*, 2, 228, and Solinus, 72.

³⁴ Str. 7, 5, 8.

³⁵ Et. Magn. s.v. ἀναπαυόμενον ὕδωρ.

³⁶ For literary references: the prose oracle in Dem. 21, 53, Sch. B. Hom. *Il.* 16, 233 (where it is derived from ναῖω). and Bekk. *Anec.* p. 283, (where it is derived from ναῦς—Periros, the son of Ikastos, the Aeolian, or the son of Aeolus, when saved from shipwreck, dedicated the temple at Dodona—and alternatively from ναός). Modern scholars have added a derivation from ναῖω 'the god who dwells' (i.e. in the oak). This last is very improbable as it is too indefinite. The ancient derivation from ναῦς is absurd, though accepted by G. Rachtel, p. 90. It could only make sense if in accordance with P. Wendland the root νᾶFo originally meant a tree-trunk (O. Kern, *Religion*, I, 85). The derivation from ναός is highly inappropriate where the god originally had no temple. ναῖω is suitable, provided nothing is based on the erroneous idea of a spring at the foot of the oak. For a fantastic development of this notion, see A. B. Cook, *Cl. Rev.* XVII (1903), 178 ff. But it is always possible that Naïos was a primitive title of unknown, non-hellenic origin.

³⁷ Theopompus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 115 f. 319 and Callimachus, fr. 630 (Pfeiffer).

³⁸ Ephorus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 70 f. 20.

³⁹ Str. 7, 7, 12.

⁴⁰ See P. W. s.n. Dione (Escher). Athens: altar on the Acropolis, first mentioned in the Erechtheum building accounts as a point of reference (*IG*, I², 373, l. 130: 409/8 B.C.); a priest's seat in the Dionysiac theatre (*IG*, II², 5113); and a dedication of a marble couch, as on the Acropolis, by an Athenian lady (*IG*, II², 4643: fourth century B.C.). This cult might have been introduced first during the Peloponnesian war at a time of *rapprochement* between Dodona and Athens, cf. p. 136. *infra*.

Crete, Ditt. *Syll.* 429, Termessos in Pisidia, *CIG*, 4366 m. In Theocr. 7, 116 Dione is probably named in place of Aphrodite in reference to Oicus in Caria.

⁴¹ Hom. *Il.* 5, 370 ff.

⁴² Ephorus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 70 f. 119 = Str. 9, 2, 4.

⁴³ Zenob. 2, 84. (citing Heraclides Ponticus).

⁴⁴ Proclus, *Chrestomathy*, ap. Phot. *Bibl.* 989 R. For the hymn sung on this occasion, cf. Sch. D.T. p. 450, ll. 12–20.

⁴⁵ *Prou. Append.* 3, 97 (Nauck fr. 368)—μῆλασμα δρυός. Cf. Suid. s.v. μνίας δάκρυον, on which, cf. Cook, *Zeus* II, 215.

⁴⁶ Clem. Alex. *Str.* 6, 2, 7 (Nauck, fr. 367).

⁴⁷ Cf. *infra*, p. 100 ff.

⁴⁸ The earliest positive evidence for the regular answering of enquiries at Delphi by the use of lots is the convention between Delphi and Sciathus, P. Amandry, *BCH.* LXIII (1939), 184. On the whole subject, see Amandry, *La mantique apollinienne à Delphes*, 25 ff., and Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 18 ff. Clearly questions put in the form εἰ λῶιον καὶ ἄμεινον ἐστὶ could readily be answered by the procedure, but early stories about Delphic enquiries usually are of a more elaborate kind and are linked to discursive answers. The first example where the Pythia is to be supposed to have drawn lots is the selection of the ten eponymous heroes for the Cleisthenic tribes (Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, II, no. 80), presumably soon after 508 B.C.

⁴⁹ For the Thriae as spirits of divination associated with Parnassus, cf. *h. Herm.* 552 ff. with Allen and Halliday's note, and Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 9 and note 23.

⁵⁰ Plu. 3, 414 b, and for a discussion of the implied date, see Parke, *Cl. Qu.* XXXVII (1943), 19 ff.

⁵¹ P. R. Franke, *Die antiken Münzen von Epirus*, II, 318 ff.

CHAPTER V

DODONA IN LATER GREEK LITERATURE

Sophocles and Herodotus do not represent fully the development of the oracle at Dodona as evidenced by our literary authorities. The fourth century adds further detail. But first one must mention the references to Dodona in the remaining dramatists. Euripides on the whole made less use of this oracle in his tragedies than Sophocles had done. In the *Andromache* Orestes mentions it as the place to which he is going when he arrives at the scene of the play in southern Thessaly. So presumably he was to be pictured as making his way to the oracle over the pass of Metsovo. In the *Phoenissae* Creon when wishing to send his son to a place of safety away from Thebes advises him to seek the oracle with the hope that Zeus will send him abroad.¹ But again, as in the *Andromache*, the expedition to Dodona never takes place. In both instances the significance in choosing this particular sanctuary for the dramatist seems to have lain in its outlandish situation. Also, as we have seen already, there were some references to Dodona in the lost *Erechtheus* in which it was used as a foil to Delphi.² The other play in which we find an allusion is the *Melanippe Desmotis*, partly recovered from papyrus. Here the heroine is delivering a great speech in justification of the importance of women: 'And in religion—highest I judge this claim—we play the greatest part. In the oracles of Phoebus women expound Apollo's will and at the holy seat of Dodona beside the sacred oak women convey the will of Zeus to all Greeks who may desire it.'³ Once more we find a fifth-century author aware of the change to prophetesses at Dodona and transferring the system unconsciously to the mythical period. Also the parallelism with Delphi is probably typical of the way in which contemporaries thought of it.

Finally Aristophanes is the only fifth-century writer of comedies who mentions Dodona. In the *parabasis* of the *Birds* the chorus are proudly explaining the importance of their functions. They are the source of all omens and as they sum it up 'To you we are Ammon,

Delphi, Dodona and Phoebus Apollo'.⁴ The *parabasis* is of course intended to have a fantastic tone of comic exaggeration, but it is interesting to note what are the two other oracular centres which Aristophanes thinks fit to name in company with Delphi—Ammon and Dodona, the same conjunction as in Herodotus, and in another passage in the same play Ammon is again mentioned together with Delphi, though this time without Dodona.

In the fourth century two authors who mention the oracle of Dodona give completely opposite pictures of its working. The earlier is Plato who introduces the subject twice in the *Phaedrus*. One is a half-jocular allusion to the oak of Zeus there as the first prophetic centre. The claim to primeval antiquity for Dodona has already occurred in Herodotus, and its repetition in Plato has no special significance. But much more remarkable is the second passage where Socrates is represented as telling Phaedrus of the three forms of madness which produce the greatest blessing for mankind. He distinguishes these as the prophetic, the purificatory, and the poetic. As instances of the first class he takes 'the prophetess at Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona who, when they have become mad, have performed many good services both public and private to Greece, though when sane they achieved little or nothing'. Plato associates with them the Sibyl and men who prophesy in ecstasy, and ends by deriving the very word for prophecy (*mantike*) from madness (*mania*).⁵

It is evident that for the purpose of his argument Plato is treating ecstatic prophecy as a form of madness and groups together as the first parallel examples the prophetesses of Delphi and Dodona. In respect of the Pythia this is not strange, for the conventional literary picture of her when prophesying in verse was that she was inspired by Apollo to a state of enthusiasm in which her own personality was submerged in that of the god. Similarly the Sibyl was described by Heraclitus (one of the first extant writers to mention her) as speaking 'with frenzied mouth'.⁶ But no previous reference to the priestesses of Dodona which we have considered has contained any implication of ecstatic prophecy. The earlier allusions to the oak tree and the doves need not presuppose that the priestesses had any function except that of interpreters, as Homer had described the Selloi, and did not imply the occurrence of ecstasy. Also Herodotus' vague generalization that the oracular methods of Dodona and Egyptian Thebes were

similar could not be made to suit with a prophetic frenzy which was the reverse of the Egyptian practice.

The only other place where the same view of the priestesses of Dodona is clearly expressed is in Pausanias who, before discussing the Sibyls, mentions that 'Phaennis the daughter of a king among the Chaones and the Doves among the Dodonaeanes prophesied themselves also under inspiration from God, though they were not called Sibyls by men'.⁷ He goes on to explain that it was possible to read the oracles of Phaennis (which therefore were in circulation as a collection) and that she could be dated as at the time of the capture of Demetrius Poliorcetes and the accession of Antiochus I of Syria (i.e. 285 and 281 B.C.). But for the priestesses of Dodona he can only give as their date that they were said to have been born even earlier than Phemonoe (the first Pythia) and were the first women to prophesy. This is again the usual claim to the prophetic primacy of Dodona. There is no indication that Pausanias could find any published edition of their prophecies. He simply quotes two isolated hexameter lines which are apparently to be taken as the original utterances of the first oracle: one is an address to Zeus, the other a glorification of the Earth goddess.

Two points in this passage of Pausanias' call for further comment. The use of hexameter verse is typical of all forms of Greek ecstatic prophecy, whether it came from an oracle-centre after enquiry, or was supposed to be the result of spontaneous revelation by a Sibyl or a male diviner. To that extent Pausanias' picture is consistent, but a curious feature is worth noting. In the line about Zeus he is both described in the third person and addressed in the vocative. This shows that the priestess, even if in ecstasy, was not supposed to be stripped of her own personality. Zeus does not speak through the Peleia in his own person as Apollo normally speaks through the Pythia. The Peleia instead resembles the Sibyl who, whether or not she is to be supposed as inspired by Apollo, does not speak in his person but in her own.

Other instances of utterances in verse attributed to the priestesses of Dodona are very infrequent and of a sort to give one no confidence in their historic accuracy. The majority belong by attribution to legendary periods. One group is connected more or less closely with the traditional history of Roman and Italic origins.⁸ Another single prophecy is assigned by our one authority for it to the time of the Dorian invasion.⁹ The only one assigned to

the historic period is a single hexameter line involving a popular type of oracular ambiguity and told in a traditional story about the death of Alexander, king of Epirus.¹⁰ None of these can be taken as evidence that the priestesses of Dodona ever spoke in ecstasy. For they are obviously fictitious. Their evidence on the type of inspiration is various. The majority contain no indication on the subject: one uses a genitive singular of Zeus and so cannot be regarded as his own utterance, but one is deliberately framed so as to imply that Zeus refers to Cronos as 'my father', when speaking through the mouth of the Peleia. These inconsistencies are to be explained as the result of different forgers working with different ideas of the right technique. One imitated the style of the Pythia; another that of the Sibyl or any ordinary prophet.

Therefore, the general effect of a survey of the other evidence suggests that Plato was giving a fictitious picture of the working of the oracle of Dodona when he grouped its priestesses with the Pythia. A quite different impression of Dodona, in no way suggesting the use of ecstasy in prophecy, is found in a fragment of Callisthenes. He was reporting in detail the omens occurring before the battle of Leuctra which had foreshadowed the Spartan defeat there. After a number of ominous happenings in Delphi and other places he goes on to describe as follows:¹¹

'But indeed the greatest portent which was given to the Spartans was that, when they had sought an oracle from Zeus of Dodona, enquiring about victory, and the ambassadors had duly placed the vessel in which were the lots, a monkey which the king of the Molossi kept as a pet overturned the lots themselves and all the other things prepared for the drawing of lots and scattered them this way and that. Then the priestess who was in charge of the oracle is said to have told the Spartans that they ought not to be thinking about winning victories, but about saving themselves.'

Callisthenes was a younger contemporary of the events which he described here in his *Hellenica* and there is no reason to doubt that the account is factually correct. Indeed it would be hard to suppose it a fantasy. Quite apart from the question whether it could be taken as a prophecy of the Spartan defeat at Leuctra, the picture which it gives of oracular procedure at Dodona, though incomplete, is still very valuable. The priestess presided. To this extent it agrees with Herodotus, and the fact that she is mentioned alone does not at all exclude the presence of two or more priestesses

acting as assistants. But there is no mention of oak tree or doves. The consultation seems to consist in the use of writing. For the *sortes* which are in an urn presented by the Spartan ambassadors are evidently their question. The exact procedure used can be considered more fully later in conjunction with the archaeological evidence from Dodona. But clearly there is a strong probability that those scholars are right who see in the *sortes* some equivalent of the many leaden tablets bearing questions addressed to Zeus which have been found on the site. The Spartan question containing a reference to victory had been put in an urn and laid before the god. The monkey overturned it and scattered the contents. Then the priestess, with ready wit, offered the interpretation. The question had been wrongly framed. It should have asked not whether the Spartans would win a victory, but whether they should survive. The god by means of the ape had scornfully rejected the original wording.

Unfortunately for us, this solitary scene of consultation carefully reported by a contemporary ends thus unexpectedly and in an abnormal way, but at least it serves to show that one method of enquiry used at Dodona in the fourth century involved the employment of lots. In this connection it is interesting to note an oracle of Zeus cited by Demosthenes and compare it with a response of the Pythia which he quotes at the same time. So as to emphasize the religious importance of the Dionysia which Meidias had sullied by his criminal assault, Demosthenes quotes oracles from Delphi and Dodona commanding the Athenians to establish choric dances in honour of Dionysus. These documents quoted in Demosthenic speeches have been the subject of much discussion in earlier editions.¹² The general opinion tends to the more cautious view that they are not authentic originals, but were composed and inserted by ancient editors of the speeches, *exempli gratia*, so as to fill out the gaps where the original documents were cited at the trial. But even if this view is accepted, it would be generally agreed that the scholars who composed them did their work excellently. If they were dealing with decrees and other legal documents, they knew the correct formulae, and there is therefore no reason to suppose that they were less well informed on religious texts.

The Delphic response is in a double form:¹³ five lines of hexameter verse tell 'the sons of Erechtheus who dwell in the city of Pandion' to remember Bacchus and establish rites in his honour;

and these are followed by several clauses of ritual prescriptions in prose ordaining offerings to various deities. The occurrence of prose and verse in one Delphic oracle is paralleled elsewhere, and may be the result of an effort to achieve two opposite objectives. The verses as the verbal utterance of the Pythia speaking in the first person in Apollo's name had an awesome effect, even if they tended to lack precision. The ritual prescriptions could be expressed exactly and in technical detail only in prose. They may also have been arrived at by some different method than ecstatic prophecy: for instance, by drawing lots.

The replies from Dodona are entirely in prose and expressed in the third person in a rather odd way.¹⁴ The main verb is 'he [or it] gives a sign' or 'signifies', and the subject is expressed without the main noun in the nominative, meaning literally 'the of Zeus'. An indefinite range of possibilities are open. The phrase taken by itself would ordinarily mean in Greek 'the son of Zeus'. But this meaning seems quite inappropriate at Dodona. An easy alternative would be to suppose 'the priest of Zeus' or 'the prophet of Zeus', and this is the translation accepted by modern scholars, but in view of what we have seen about the use of priestesses in the fifth or fourth century the use of the masculine article in this sense is rather strange. It cannot refer to the oak, or the dove, for both these nouns would be feminine in Greek. The only other possibility is that it might leave unexpressed some noun such as 'lot' (*cleros*). This would fit what we have seen of the procedure and may justify one in supposing that the document, though a faintly dubious source, preserves a Dodonaean formula, otherwise unrecorded.

However the phrase is to be understood, the main point that emerges is the relatively impersonal form of the Dodonaean response when compared with the Pythian. In this respect it seems to fit with Strabo's observation:¹⁵ 'Zeus used to utter oracles not by words but by certain tokens, just as the oracle of Ammon in Libya.' The replies quoted by Demosthenes run: 'Oracles from Dodona. To the people of the Athenians the [oracle] of Zeus signifies: because you have missed the seasons for the sacrifice and the sacred embassy, he bids you send ambassadors on this account with speed; to Zeus Naios three bulls and beside each bull two rams, to Dione a cow to offer in sacrifice and a bronze table to join the offering which the people of Athens had dedicated. The

[oracle] of Zeus in Dodona signifies: to Dionysus to accomplish public services and to mix a mixing bowl and set up dances, to Apollo the Averter to sacrifice a bull, and to wear garlands, free and slave alike, and to keep holiday one day, and to offer Zeus Ctesios a white bull.'

As the heading suggests it looks as if we have two separate oracles of Dodona given on two different occasions. Only the second one with its reference to Dionysus is of importance to Demosthenes in this context, but the earlier one with its sharp reminder about the Athenian obligations to Zeus and Dione is of more interest to us.¹⁶ There is nothing in the manner or matter to suggest ecstatic prophecy. Instead, it is all the kind of material which might have been evoked by drawing lots. The various ritual prescriptions might each have been inscribed on a separate tablet and drawn from a larger group. Even the statement that sacrifices were overdue would not be inappropriate to treat in this way as a stock answer. No doubt some application of the words would always have been found by further investigation.

Thus we have already traced in our literary authorities no less than five different ways in which it was alleged that the oracle at Dodona functioned: by the speaking oak, or by means of doves, by prophetesses in ecstasy or drawing lots, and by the murmuring of a sacred fountain.¹⁷ One more method is alleged in ancient sources and is connected with yet other marvels in the sanctuary. The 'brazen vessel' of Dodona was proverbial as a comparison for the talkative. Our earliest quotation to illustrate it is also our fullest. It comes from Menander's *Arrephorus*, where someone describes a female character, evidently a sort of Sarah Gamp:¹⁸

'Give this creature Myrtilé the merest touch or simply call "nurse", and there's no end to her talking. To stop the bronze vessel at Dodona, which they say sounds all day if a passer-by lays a finger on it, would be an easier job than to stop her tongue; for it sounds all night as well.' Briefer references in Callimachus and later writers illustrate the same usage. But already by the time of Menander scholars were attempting to explain the origin of the proverbial phrase, and the two accounts which they gave were picturesque, but completely inconsistent.

Demon, the author of a book about proverbs written in the late fourth century, explained that the temple of Zeus at Dodona had no walls, but instead many tripods were set up so near to one

another that when one touched one of them it passed on the resonant vibration by touch until it had traversed them all and the echo took a long time to travel round.¹⁹ One version adds that it did not stop till one touched the original tripod again. The tripods which one is to picture are no doubt large bronze objects with deep bowls which would produce a resonant echo. In fact the picture, though odd, is not completely improbable as an acoustic phenomenon. The more extraordinary feature is the notion that at the end of the fourth century B.C., the sanctuary at Dodona was still so primitive in its installations as not to have a normal stone-walled temple. But perhaps here we may not be fair to Demon, whose account is only extant in late paraphrases. He may have made it clear that he was not referring to contemporary conditions. Bronze cauldron-tripods were a favourite object of dedication in the archaic period at Dodona, as at other shrines, and it is possible that before the temple was built, the tripods had been ranged like a fence round the heart of the sacred enclosure.

But, as we have said, there was a completely different alternative explanation in antiquity. It can be traced to Polemon the great antiquary, who was active in the late third and early second century B.C.²⁰ Negatively he or some other scholar urged against Demon that the proverb spoke of 'the bronze vessel at Dodona', while his account required an indefinite number of cauldrons as the explanation. There is some acuteness in the criticism, but, apart from the question whether the word 'vessel' in Greek could be collective, as Cook has argued, the visitor to Dodona is represented as touching a single tripod so as to produce his multiple resonance, and this explanation seems near enough to the use of the singular in the proverb.²¹

However, Polemon had also a positive alternative to offer. 'At Dodona two columns stand in the open, parallel and near to each other, on the one is a small bronze vessel, like a modern cauldron, on the other a little boy with a whip in his right hand which is the side on which is the column with the cauldron. Whenever, then, the wind happens to blow, the thongs of the whip (which are of bronze, but like real thongs), are lifted by the wind and happen to touch the bronze vessel and do this constantly so long as the wind lasts.'

Strabo, drawing from this or another source adds some further details which are probably not inconsistent and should be fitted in

to the account. The whip was made of three lashes wrought like chain mail and had bones attached to it. This last feature is known from other descriptions of ancient scourges. He states that from the beginning to the end of the echo created by the wind one could count four hundred. But his most interesting contribution to the account is his statement that the statue was a dedication of the Corcyraeans. To Strabo this fact is significant because he uses it also to explain another proverbial saying 'The whip of the Corcyraeans', which can be traced back as early as Aristophanes.²² This fact would be important as a possible ground for dating the dedication to the fifth century at latest; but unfortunately for this proverb also there is an alternative explanation which is much more likely to be correct.

However, there is no reason whatever to doubt Polemon's description. He was a famous writer on this particular subject of the dedications in the chief Greek sanctuaries and evidently he usually founded his descriptions on autopsy and on enquiries made on the spot. That he had actually visited Dodona cannot be proved, but it remains very likely. Also we need not doubt the additional fact that the statue of the boy was dedicated by the Corcyraeans. They had close contacts with Dodona which was near to their island, and would be very likely to honour Zeus with important offerings. The date remains quite uncertain. It must be before the time of Polemon and from the complicated form of the statue is not likely to have been much before 500 B.C. But between these rather wide limits anything else is mere surmise.

The later history of the dedication can be traced through Stephanus of Byzantium to a further, pathetic, stage. Lucius of Tarrha, an authority on proverbs, probably writing in the first century A.D., said: 'In our time the handle of the whip is preserved, but the lashes have fallen off. However I have heard from one of the local inhabitants that when the bronze vessel was struck by the whip it echoed for long, since Dodona is a stormy place.' So though the dedication was gradually becoming defective, the tradition of its earlier performance persisted locally.

The origin of the popular saying about the 'bronze vessel at Dodona' is not our main concern. Polemon's explanation is better attested in so far as there is no reason to doubt the existence of the Corcyraean dedication. The echoing cauldrons set up as a fence are less well authenticated, but there can be no question that they

fit the earliest reference in Menander much better. His character talks of a passer-by starting the echoes by a touch. This would be possible for a cauldron standing on the ground, but not one set on a column. In fact in the Corcyraean dedication all the emphasis of our descriptions turns on the spontaneous action of the wind. There is no hint that a human hand could reach the whip and start its operation. So only Demon's explanation suits Menander's reference. Of course this may simply mean that Menander had read Demon, and when quoting the popular saying, glossed it with a phrase or two borrowed from that author's description. But more probably Cook is right in suggesting that the origin of the saying was to be found in some such arrangement of cauldrons as Demon described. Later, when the temple had taken its place, the Corcyraean dedication was adopted as the embodiment of the traditional phrase.

From our point of view it is more remarkable that we can find a late tradition that the cauldron or cauldrons at Dodona were used for divination. It appears first in Clement of Alexandria who groups 'the mouths of caverns full of sorcery or the cauldron of Thesprotia, or the Cirrhaean tripod, or the Dodonaean bronze-vessel' together as godless instruments of pagan oracles.²³ He does not explain the reference further, but a series of Byzantine writers describe in various ways how the enquirer entered the sanctuary and prayed, and the statue beat on the cauldron with his rod, producing a rhythmical echo which inspired the prophetesses to utter an oracle. The Christian writers, of course, accept the view that this was the work of a demon and explain that demons have to use such methods because their own voices are inarticulate.

As it stands the account of the oracular consultation is quite unconvincing, and could be put down to a Christian legend. But it is a greater problem to trace whether there were any hints of the same idea in pre-Christian authors. The ordinary reference and explanation about the bronze vessel at Dodona do not contain any such suggestion. Philostratus the younger in a very colourful description of a painting (perhaps imaginary) of Dodona, while working in practically every feature of the local tradition, refers to Echo with her hand on her mouth and alludes to the vessel.²⁴ Immediately previously he had described Dodona as a place 'packed full of ominous sound'. So it may be possible that he is thinking of the cauldron as having an oracular function when it

echoed, but it is difficult to be certain in his highly figurative description. Also he was writing already after Clement: so he is only at most evidence for a popular belief in late periods. He does not prove that the use of the cauldron for divination was known or practised in the times of Dodona's activity.

The only classical Greek author whose words could imply such use is Callimachus. In the *Hymn to the Delian Apollo* when he wishes to question the priests of Dodona he calls them 'the Pelasgians . . . the earth-liers, the servants of the unsilenced cauldron'.²⁵ Evidently this is a reference to the traditional 'bronze vessel', but the problem is: when Callimachus calls the priests 'servants' does he really mean that they used the cauldron in divination or simply that this was one of the venerated objects under their care in the sanctuary? The very self-conscious literary character of the context with its Homeric allusions and its legendary picture of male priests, not prophetesses, makes it most unlikely that there was any real reference to an oracular function intended. The only other place in classical literature where we can seek the idea is in a Latin poet. Lucan groups together in one rhetorical sequence 'the tripods of Delos, the Pythian caverns' and 'what Dodona, the nurturer with primitive fruits, sounds on the bronze vessel of Jupiter'.²⁶ This is in a list of the oracular methods which Sextus Pompeius wilfully refuses to employ in his preference for magical divination. There is no doubt that Lucan meant to suggest that the bronze vessel at Dodona could give oracles. The scholiast explains it with a commentary that evidently derives rather from Demon's cauldrons than the Corcyraean dedication. It may, of course, be Lucan's own fancy, but it does also perhaps point to more general belief in the first century A.D. that the oracle at Dodona had given responses by the noise of a brazen vessel. However, by this date as we have seen there can have been no such system in existence at Dodona. Demon's fence of cauldrons, if it ever existed, must long have been removed. The Corcyraean dedication was still standing, but it was dumb without lashes to beat the echoes. In fact whether invented by Lucan or some other writer, the notion of the prophetic cauldron is probably no more than a figment of the imagination. One will not want to deny that the ancient Greeks were quick to draw omens from sounds, however apparently fortuitous. If a passer-by produced a long series of echoes from Demon's cauldron-fence, he might well take it as a lucky sign. If a visitor was greeted

by the Corcyraean dedication with a long series of buffets on the bronze vessel, he may have assumed that this was a favourable indication. But we need not suppose that either omen was accepted by the prophetesses of Dodona as one of their official methods of producing an oracular response. It would be natural enough that when the oracle-centre had ceased to function, literary tradition would seize hold of the fragmentary allusions preserved in the classical authors and reshape those to suit its fancy. Such notions may even have been taken up in the end at Dodona itself, and there developed further. At least it is interesting to notice that the Christian authors when they mention the statue beating the cauldron do not describe him as using a whip, but a rod. As we have seen, by the mid first century A.D. at least the thongs had gone, the handle only remained, and the vessel was silent. At that time the local inhabitants could still tell how the dedication had originally worked. But later when it simply stood as a boy holding out a rod in the direction of a cauldron, it was possible for the imaginative guide to tell the visitor that by the power of demons the bronze figure moved and struck the vessel whenever the pagan oracle was consulted.

Of the two explanations of the popular saying about the bronze vessel at Dodona, Demon's cauldrons were probably a merely accidental happening. They were not intended to echo when dedicated, though possibly once discovered the phenomenon may have been exploited locally as a marvel. The Corcyraean dedication was evidently expressly designed to produce the remarkable effects which it did. Perhaps the previous existence of 'sounding brass' at Dodona influenced the artist. But Fraser and Cook are probably right in their suggestion that the noise and the whip itself had a real function in the ritual of the place.²⁷ It was not in itself oracular, but it would by its cheerful din drive off evil influences, and the lash of the whip suggested lightning. Also the boom of an echoing cauldron had a special appropriateness in the sanctuary of Zeus. He was the god of thunder, and to the popular ear the voice of a brazen bell has often seemed the nearest human equivalent. So no doubt the merry noise of the bone-tipped lashes beating on the bronze cauldron was meant by the Corcyraeans both to protect the sanctuary and to please the god who dwelt there. These would have been sufficient functions for it to perform without being expected also to speak his oracles.

NOTES

¹ Euripides, *Andr.* 885 and *Phoe.* 980.

² Cf. *supra*, p. 72. Eur. *fr.* 367 and 368 (Nauck). Also in an unidentified play (*fr.* 1021) he referred to three doves, not two, at Dodona.

³ Denys Page, *Greek Literary Papyri*, I, 112, ll. 3 ff.

⁴ Aristoph. *Av.* 716. Ammon is mentioned again at 618.

⁵ Pl. *Phdr.* 275b (the oak) and 244b. The question how far Plato's reference to the priestesses of Dodona related to actual oracular practice there is not discussed in the recent commentators: C. Ritter (Leipzig, 1914), Hackforth (Cambridge, 1952), K. Hildebrandt (Kiel, 1953) and G. Galli (Bari, 1949). Plato's contrast between the state of the prophetic when normal and when inspired is worked up into a literary motif in Aelius Aristides, 2, 11 and 12, 10. Maximus Tyrius, 8 1b transfers the point to the Selloi.

⁶ Plu. 3, 397b = Heraclitus, *fr.* 92.

⁷ Paus. 10, 12.10.

⁸ (1) DH. 1, 19, 3; Macr. *Sat.* 1, 7, 28. In both versions, which differ in some points, τῶν πατρῶν is used of Cronos (Saturn).

(2) DH. 1, 67, 4. Διὸς κούρης is used in reference to Athena. Cf. *infra*, pp. 146 ff.

⁹ Paus. 7, 25.1. Cf. *infra*, p. 131.

¹⁰ Scr. 6, 1, 5; St. Byz. s.v. Πανδοσία.

¹¹ Callisthenes, *F.Gr. Hist.* 124 f. 22 (a) and (b) = Cic. *de Div.* 1, 34, 76 and 2, 32, 69.

¹² The latest editor of the *Speech against Midias*, Jean Humbert (Budé, Paris, 1959, Vol. II, pp. 11 ff.) rejects these two oracles as late insertions in our mss. His emphasis on the corrupt state of our text seems a weak argument. It is due to the peculiar vocabulary and style of documents; entirely different from the rest of the copyist's material. The occurrence of both prose and verse in the Delphic response is not an argument for spuriousness, since this combination is found elsewhere (e.g. Parke and Wormell, *D.O.* II, no. 17). One strong argument against supposing that they are forgeries is that the quotations from Dodona include one oracle which does not mention Dionysus and so is completely irrelevant to Demosthenes' discussion. Presumably it was dragged in originally by his mistake when making extracts from responses given to the Athenian state. Also the Dodonaean oracle appears to have contained the proper title of Zeus Naïos (though corrupted in our mss. to νᾱρω). This epithet, correctly restored by Buttman, is scarcely known from literary sources. Cf. *supra*, p. 68. So probably Goodwin in his edition (p. 33) is right in stating: 'These oracles may be genuine. They are not to be discredited on the grounds which cause the rejection of most of the laws and other public documents in the extant orators.'

¹³ Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, II, no. 282.

¹⁴ Demosthenes, 21, 53. Humbert translates with comment: 'signifie l'Interprète de Zeus.' Goodwin annotates: 'ὁ τοῦ Διὸς: sc. προφήτης.' J. H. Vince translates: 'the prophet of Zeus announces' without comment. The earliest reference I have found is H. Weil (Paris, 1877) 'sous-ent. προφήτης. C'est le prêtre qui transmet la réponse du dieu.'

¹⁵ Str. 7, fr. 1. (Loeb) = St. Byz. s.v. Δωδώνη.

¹⁶ Cf. Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 338 (discussing this example): also pp. 272 and 280. The earliest instance of a begging oracle of this kind from Delphi is *D.O.*, II, no. 260.

¹⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 11, 35, 68, 81, and 83.

¹⁸ Menander, *fr.* 66 (Kock); St. Byz. s.v. Δωδώνη; Call. *fr.* 483 (Pfeiffer) and *Hymn*, 4, 286.

¹⁹ Demon ap. St. Byz. s.v. Δωδώνη; Suid. s.v. Δωδωναίων χαλκείον; Sch. B. Hom. II. 16, 233; Eustath. *Od.* 14, 1760.

²⁰ Polemon and Aristides ap. St. Byz. l.c. Aristoteles in place of Aristides in mss. of Suidas, l.c. and Sch. Hom. l.c. Cf. Pliny, *HN*, 36, 194 (describing Porsenna's tomb) for a loose reference to 'exapta catenis tintinabula quae vento agitata longe sonitus referent ut Dodonae olim factum'.

²¹ A. B. Cook, *JHS*, 22 (1902), 12.

²² Str. 7, fr. 3 (Loeb). For an allusion to 'the whip of the Corcyreans', Ar. *Av.* 1463. But this is otherwise explained in the scholia and the Paroemiographers as a proverbial phrase derived from the huge whips used by the Corcyreans to maintain public order (Zen. 4, 49; Diogenian. 5, 50; Plu. *Prov.* 12; Apostol. 9, 69). For the familiar use of the phrase in the fourth century cf. Lycurgus ap. [Plu.] 842d. Zenodotus and the scholia appear to quote Aristotle's *Corcyraean constitution* for the explanation (*F.H.G.*, Vol. II, p. 149, fr. 139).

²³ Clem. Al. *Prot.* 2, 11, 1, repeated in Euseb. *P.E.* 2, 3, 1 and paraphrased in Theodoret. *Gr. Aff. Cur.* 10, 3, p. 243, 3. He refers to both a λέβητα Θεσπρώτιον as well as the Δωδωναίων χαλκείον. Whether the former is the cauldron into which Myrtille was thrown (cf. *supra*, p. 72) is not clear. For its use by inarticulate demons, Suidas, s.v. Δωδώνη; Sch. B. Hom. II. 16, 233.

²⁴ Philostr. *Im.* 2, 33.

²⁵ Call., *h. Ap.* 286.

²⁶ Lucan, 6, 425 with the scholia. Cf. also the ambiguous remark in Val. Max. 8, 15, ext. 2. [Amphiarus] cuius cineres idem honoris possident, quod Pythicae cortinae, quod ahenod Dodonae, quod Ammonis fonti datur. The ashes of Amphiarus could be regarded as an instrument of prophecy and also the Delphic tripod. But there is no evidence that the fountain at Ammon was used for this purpose. Cf. *infra*, pp. 199 and 245.

²⁷ Frazer, *Golden Bough*³, The Magic Art, ii, 358 ff. and A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, II, 826.

CHAPTER VI

DODONA: THE MATERIAL REMAINS

The site of the sanctuary of Dodona is near the foot of a low hill, which lies towards the head of the deep valley of Tcharacovitsa. It is some twelve miles from Jannina, until lately only reached by one steep and difficult mountain road studded with hairpin bends. The identification with the ancient oracular centre was made conjecturally by Christopher Wordsworth in 1832,¹ but was not established until Constantine Carapanos in 1875-76 organized an extensive excavation of the site. At a date so early in the history of archaeological research, it is not surprising that his methods were entirely unscientific. He was evidently not unaware of the use of the spade to reconstruct history, but his technique for this purpose was almost non-existent, and apart from the unearthing of several scattered buildings his main result was the discovery of a number of bronze statuettes and other metal fragments, including quantities of inscribed lead tablets. The results were described in his book, *Dodone et ses Ruines*, published three years later:² and the small finds are now preserved in the National Museum in Athens.

But Carapanos had not been entirely successful in controlling his excavation, and various bronzes from the site turned up later outside Greece. The most important group found its way by purchase to the Berlin Museum where it was sumptuously published, with a dedication to the Kaiser, by Kekulé von Stradonitz and H. Winnefeld in 1909.³

The site itself remained untouched after Carapanos' plundering, until 1920 when the Greek Archaeological Society arranged one season's excavation by G. Soteriades.⁴ Again there was an interval until 1929 when Demetrios Evangelides came on the scene. From that year until 1959 he conducted a succession of brief, but recurring digs, sometimes held up by lack of funds or interrupted by the war, but managing gradually to clear the main structures of the sanctuary and make sense of Carapanos' confused foragings. Particularly by going down to prehistoric levels Evangelides was able

to extend the view of Dodona's past far beyond the surface remains. He published current reports on his results regularly and carefully in the *Praktika* of the Archaeological Society or in the local learned journal, *Epeirōtika Chronika*.⁵ But unfortunately he did not live to produce a formal survey of the site and the excavations as a whole; and though his reports were very adequate within their limits, Dodona raises certain general problems which call for discursive discussion by an archaeologist well acquainted with the evidence.

The gap has to some extent been filled by S. I. Dakaris, the ephor of antiquities in Epirus, who had assisted Evangelides in his last campaigns and has since then cleared the Greek theatre and generally put the site in order. In a number of publications he has summarized the results of the excavations and the history of the buildings.⁶

Probably the remaining areas within the sanctuary which are still unexcavated would not yield significant material comparable with what has already been found. But the acropolis of Dodona on the top of the hill immediately adjacent to the sanctuary still remains untouched. It is an irregular oblong of some two hundred yards on each side surrounded by a Hellenistic wall fortified with towers. Though its evidence would presumably be secular rather than religious, there is no telling what further light it might cast on the history of Dodona and its inhabitants.

Therefore when one calls in the evidence of archaeology to supplement that of literature, one must recognize that future excavations might amplify and change the picture, and that even what has already been found still gives scope for additional investigations and discussion.

It was one of Evangelides' greatest achievements to have shown that the site of the sanctuary had been occupied extensively in prehistoric times. Hand-made pottery of the neolithic style was found in great quantities all over the site. In a layer some 0.25 metres in thickness in places it underlay the surface at depths varying from 1.30 to 0.55 metres. The potter's clay is ash black with occasional red markings and contains many gleaming white crystals. It is hand worked and of good appearance with smooth polish. The shapes that can be reconstructed suggest connections in three directions, all of which would seem to fit plausibly with our ancient traditions. The occurrence of handles of what Heurtley called the

wish-bone shape shows a close connection to similar finds on sites in Macedon and Thessaly. This type of handle appears in Macedon by the middle of the third millennium B.C. and later spread south to Thessaly and Aetolia. Hammond conjecturally dates its introduction to Epirus about 1700 B.C. It appears to imply some community of culture linking prehistoric Epirus with the inhabitants of Macedon and Thessaly over the passes of the Pindus range. Also some pieces from Dodona show such resemblances to finds on Leucas that Evangelides writes of them as material from the same workshop. This fits with contacts between Dodona and the Ionian islands. Evangelides also noted some stylistic connections with Thermon in Aetolia.⁷

Compared with the pottery from Macedon and Thessaly Dodona is poorer in elaboration of shapes and in technique. It lacks the incurved lip, and is without painted designs or glazing, but there is more emphasis on rope-patterns and plastic moulding. In fact the potters of Dodona while sharing a common style with their neighbours to the north-east, east and west, had also some local characteristics, partly the consequence of their greater isolation from external influences, but also due in part to their individual style.

Evangelides found himself unable to distinguish earlier and later strata in the prehistoric layer. But the preponderance of earlier types seemed best explained on the hypothesis that the community was more thriving then and for some unknown reason was gradually reduced in population in later periods. A stranger fact to explain is the entire absence of buildings. Though Evangelides had found in great abundance the food vessels, loom-weights and other such materials of prolonged human occupation of the site, he quite failed to identify the foundations of any prehistoric dwellings. At most one prehistoric hearth has been located.⁸ Of course, the area is not fully explored and particularly the top of the hill where the Hellenistic city stood is quite unexcavated. But it is hard to explain why if the neolithic inhabitants had their houses elsewhere on the site they scattered their sherds so freely in layers all over the later sanctuary. An easier explanation is to suppose that the people of the hand-made pottery were nomadic or, at least migratory in their habits. If instead of building permanent houses they had come to Dodona seasonally each year with flocks and herds, a layer of broken pot sherds could accumulate on the site,

while their temporary shelters erected afresh each year might have left no trace for the archaeologist.⁹

What brought them to the site we cannot tell for certain. It might be that the Tcharacovitsa valley offered convenient pasturage in summer. Dodona is at a height of about 1600 feet above sea level. It was probably more wooded in earlier days, but even now it produces large and shady trees compared with much of Greece, and Mount Tomaros, now as in antiquity, was provided with plentiful springs. So the purpose of the prehistoric inhabitants may have been to find a place for their flocks in the hot weather. None of Evangelides' finds of the neolithic style furnished any evidence of a local cult. So while it is likely enough that even at this early date the worship of a god was practised amid the oak trees, no proof of it is forthcoming.¹⁰

Another remarkable feature, again of a negative character, is the absence of any pottery of either Middle and Late Helladic or pre-geometric type. The neolithic strata are immediately overlaid by strata of the historic period, beginning with bronze fragments dating from the eighth century. The absence of pottery imported from the Mycenaean world is perhaps to be taken as typical of Epirus. A small quantity of the pottery found at Dodona and also elsewhere in Epirus suggests resemblances to Minyan ware from Messenia and would probably be of Middle Helladic date. The coast of Epirus has yielded sherds of Mycenaean pottery (Late Helladic III), and three kilometres from Parga, north of the mouth of the river Acheron, a tholos tomb was found containing sherds of Late Helladic III b.¹¹ But no Mycenaean pottery has been found inland at Dodona. So unless new discoveries upset the present evidence, the picture produced is of occasional trade and perhaps local settlement from southern Greece up the shore of the Ionian sea, but no regular penetration inland.

It appears as if weapons penetrated where pottery did not. For among the objects found by Carapanos can now be identified a horned rapier of bronze and an iron sword.¹² The former is of a type characteristic of Late Helladic II at Mycenae (1500-1400 B.C.) but examples from Dendra show that it might have lasted well into the next century. The sword is a typical example of the close of Late Helladic III (about 1200-1100 B.C.) and is of a kind found widely throughout the Mycenaean world. These two are not isolated examples, for other rapiers and swords of southern origin

have been found elsewhere in inland Epirus. Hammond is probably right in conjecturing that besides the sea routes there existed a continental route northward for trade from the Mediterranean which passed through this region on the way to central Europe.

The trade was probably not all one way. A number of other finds made at Dodona by Carapanos and elsewhere in Epirus show northern influence in about the same period. In one of a group of graves near Kalbaki Dakaris found a one-bladed knife with riveted haft of a Hungarian type from the Urnfield culture of the thirteenth century B.C. A much larger knife of the same type was excavated by Carapanos. At Kalbaki in the same graveyard Dakaris found a Mycenaean dagger of Late Helladic III b and a necklace with beads of amber, chalcedony, rock crystal and clay. These finds beautifully illustrate the opposite lines of trade meeting in north-west Greece.¹³ Another Hungarian import is a bronze axe from Dodona which belongs to the same Urnfield culture.¹⁴ Hammond has also identified a double-bladed axe from Dodona as similar to one from Kilindir in the Vardar valley and related to Danubian types.¹⁵ Of course it would not be safe to assume that these weapons all came in the course of trade. Some at least may mark the track of an invader, and Hammond is particularly inclined to see in the northern objects the armament of the conqueror. Certainly it is unlikely that, if a Mycenaean king had marched north and occupied Epirus, he would have left no other signs of his conquest.

After the prehistoric layer at Dodona and immediately on top of it were found no geometric pottery of the style produced in the rest of Greece, but some fibulae, legs of tripods, and a few bronze figurines all to be assigned to the eighth century B.C. and typical enough of the Hellenic art of that time. They are the earliest examples of what prove to be a more and more plentiful supply of miscellaneous bronzes reaching down in date throughout the archaic period. The problem is how to explain the occurrence of these finds in direct sequence after layers characterized by pottery which would be classed as neolithic. As Evangelides suggests, we are faced with two extreme alternatives: either we must suppose that after the prehistoric period there was an interval (leaving no trace) when the site remained uninhabited, and followed by the geometric period in which occupation was resumed with the foundation of the oracle, or else we must suppose that the neolithic

style of pottery continued to be made virtually unchanged down to the geometric period. Either hypothesis has its difficulties. But surely if there had been a gap of some centuries at least when Dodona was unvisited by native shepherds the excavators would have found some indications in the form of a layer of soil without traces of human artefacts? As it is, they report the Hellenic geometric as directly overlying the neolithic. Hence it seems best with Evangelides to suppose a local perpetuation of the neolithic style down to the time when archaic Greece began to introduce its influence into Epirus.¹⁶

It is worth while to pause and note that this archaeological picture may not be difficult to reconcile with our literary evidence. As we saw in Homer, Dodona is on the outmost edge of the known Greek world. In the Catalogue it is inserted as an uncomfortable extension to Thessaly, and neither the chieftain nor his tribes ever occurs in the action of the poem. In Achilles' prayer Zeus of Dodona dwells far off, and his priests are highly peculiar in their unhellenic and primitive practices. Even in the *Odyssey*, where it is not regarded as strange that Odysseus should stop to consult the oracle of Zeus, it is perhaps significant that it is the first point at which he is pictured as entering the known world after his wanderings in the beyond.

No doubt scholars will be found who will interpret these passages as reflecting into the past of the second millennium B.C. conditions which only existed in the geometric period at earliest. But to me, at least, it seems much more plausible to suppose that the Homeric picture is broadly true and quite consistent with our archaeological evidence so far as it goes. In the second millennium the site of Dodona was occupied by a very primitive people, who, if they were Greeks, had not acquired any of the culture which their contemporaries in Mycenae possessed. They may have only lived seasonally at Dodona, except for a few priests who perhaps stayed all the year. They were rarely visited by travellers from outside Epirus, and those who did come have left us few material traces of their pilgrimages.

With the geometric period the picture changes somewhat. The bronze objects found—fragments of tripods, figurines, fibulae—can best be explained, not as private furniture, but as offerings dedicated to the god.¹⁷ The series, as we have seen, run on continuously and in increasing quantity till we reach the inscribed

dedications of the classical period, when the intention of the dedicator is beyond doubt. Most of the archaic dedications could not be said to have any special local significance. The tripods, brooches and statuettes are the same kind of objects as found at other archaic temples. Only the doves and figures of Zeus wielding a thunderbolt from the late archaic period have a special topical significance. The local origins of many of the statuettes, particularly from 600 B.C. to the classical period, can be plausibly conjectured. Again and again the examples are classed as Corinthian, Laconian, or at least generally Peloponnesian. It is not until the mid-fifth century that examples of probably Ionian origin are recorded. Of course the location of the workshop does not prove that the man who dedicated the object came from the same district. But generally a contrast with Delphi is noticeable. While the buildings and objects dedicated to the Pythian Apollo frequently show Eastern connections and our literary sources agree in the picture that the enquirers at Delphi often came from Ionia or the Aegean Islands, the dedications at Dodona in the archaic period suggest a clientèle completely or almost completely confined to the Peloponnese and west Greece.

The bronzes from Dodona are a striking collection, giving a strong impression of the importance of the site, but the really remarkable result of the excavation, disclosed originally by Carapanos, was the finding of the leaden inscribed tablets. He published the texts of some 27, and Pomtow put the number up to 35 by reading some of those neglected by Carapanos. Gomperz edited a couple of further fragments which had been sold separately. Also the Berlin museum acquired an additional number. These were known for some twenty-five years when Evangelides' excavations started to produce many more. Some 100 have been published and there is still a certain amount of unpublished material in the Museum in Jannina, some of which at least could be read satisfactorily. Thus the lead tablets represent the evidence, sometimes very fragmentary for a minimum of about 150 enquiries. For each of these documents contains at least one question asked of the oracle. Sometimes in fact they give indications of more than one question each. For evidently the tablets could be re-used and some of them are clearly palimpsests, on which some earlier message has been rubbed out to allow of the inscribing of a later one.¹⁸

This was no doubt one of the reasons for the choice of lead as a material in the working of the oracle. It was cheap enough, easy to inscribe and could be re-used. All these factors were of importance, for it is clear from our surviving specimens that the questions were written in the most miscellaneous forms of handwriting, in different varieties of the Greek alphabet and with all the variations of spelling and grammar which the individual might give to his enquiry. The conclusion to be drawn is that the lead tablets were written on by the private enquirer himself, in most, if not all, instances, and it was therefore of importance for him to have a material which would not be expensive and which even an untrained writer could inscribe.

The informal character of these documents is a clear pledge of their authenticity. But this widely varying selection of styles of writing with various degrees of education makes it somewhat of a task to assign dates on epigraphical grounds. However, few, if any, can be as early as the sixth century B.C. and at earliest must date from the closing years of that century. For the next two hundred years they are quite plentiful with perhaps more in the later than the earlier century. Some may date after 300 B.C. but generally there are none which need be attributed to a period after 250 B.C. The tablets seem to have been found not in one exclusive area or stratum of the sanctuary, but scattered in dumps all over it. Hence with this evidence for between one and two hundred enquiries by means of lead tablets one may hazard the supposition that we have a fair cross-section in time of the working of the oracle. This points to a practice starting not much before 500 B.C. and ending after the middle of the third century B.C.

The shape and size of the tablets and the form in which they were found may offer some indications about the oracular procedure. The lead is not cut in square or oblong shapes like pages, but in narrow bands like short ribbons. The writing in some two to four lines always runs along the length of the band, and in nearly every instance the lead has then been neatly folded several times so as to conceal the writing inside. A typical example from Carapanos' original finds is about 3 inches long by an inch wide and was folded into four sections by means of three folds. This process of folding was evidently the reason for the shape of the lead, which lent itself to rolling up like a ribbon. Also it frequently explains the fragmentary state of the enquiries because in many

instances the lead had broken along one or more of its folds reducing the band to segments, which often have not been preserved as a whole.

Another feature about the tablets is typical and significant. The enquiry is always written on one face only and is never carried over to the reverse. But it is usual enough for something to be written on the back: sometimes a single letter, probably intended as a serial number, sometimes the name of the enquirer or an abbreviation of it, sometimes a reference to the subject of the enquiry in brief. These short notes are often very difficult to interpret, but their purpose generally seems to be to enable someone to identify the enquiry without having to unroll the lead ribbon again and read its contents. Also from the circumstance that so many of the enquiries were found rolled up, it is evident that that was the state in which they were left at the end of the enquiry.

This indication of a method of consultation in which the enquiry was written on a lead ribbon, rolled up and then marked with some identification on the outside invites one to compare it with descriptions of oracles where the enquiry was submitted in writing. For Dodona we have no description of a consultation which covers this aspect in detail. But elsewhere in the Greek world instances occur which can be examined for analogies. Except for one example they come from periods of later date than the time when this method was in use at Dodona. The only instance contemporary with the flourishing of the Epirote oracle is a rather remarkable and actually unique example from Delphi, known from a detailed account in an Attic inscription of the fourth century B.C.¹⁹ In 352 B.C. the Athenians wished to ascertain from the Pythian Apollo whether or not they should leave untilled certain sacred land at Eleusis, and the official method used was laid down in the following instructions.

"The secretary of the council is to write on two tin tablets, equal and similar, on the one: "whether it is better and more good for the people of Athens that the Basileus lease the land that has already been cultivated within the bounds of the sacred meadow for the purpose of building a portico and providing additional equipment for the sanctuary of the Two Goddesses": and on the other tin tablet "whether it is better and more good for the people of Athens to leave untilled to the Two Goddesses the land that has already been cultivated within the bounds of the sacred meadow".

When the secretary has written it, the chairmen of the *Prohedroi* is to take each of the tin tablets and roll it up and having wrapped it in wool he is to place it in a bronze jar before the people. The committee of the council are to prepare these things and the treasurers of the Goddess are to bring down a golden and a silver jar immediately to the people, and the chairman is to shake up the bronze jar and draw out each of the tin tablets in turn and is to place the former in the gold jar and the latter in the silver jar and to tie down the lids and the chairman of the committee is to seal it with the state seal and any other of the Athenians who wishes may seal beside him. Whenever then they have been sealed down, the treasurers are to carry them up to the acropolis. The people are to elect three men, one from the council, and two from all the Athenians, who are to go to Delphi to enquire of the god in accordance with which of the two writings the Athenians are to act with regard to the sacred meadow, whether in accordance with that in the gold jar or that in the silver, and when they have come from the god, they are to bring down the jars and are to read to the people the oracle and the writings on the tin tablets, and in accordance with which of the writings the god shall choose that it is better and more good for the people of Athens, according to that they are to do.'

This unique and peculiar method of consulting the Delphic oracle is, of course, much more elaborate than the procedure which must have been used by hundreds of very ordinary private individuals consulting Zeus. Yet there are some analogous features. The Athenian enquiry was written on tin, not lead, but it was rolled up like the tablets from Dodona. Evidently one of the reasons for choosing these odd metals for writing on was because they could be treated in this way. Actually the Athenians were not content to write one enquiry and leave it to the oracle either to accept or reject it as 'better and more good'. They wrote out both alternatives and made the *Pythia* choose. There is no sign that at Dodona those consulting the oracle submitted alternatives, for two questions from the same enquirer have never been proved. Again in the Athenian instance the written enquiries never left Athens, but were held on the acropolis, while the oracle was simply asked to choose between the contents of a gold or a silver jar. At Dodona the enquiry written on lead was apparently handed in to the priestly officials. But even so its rolled-up state seems to

have been meant to exclude the use of human intelligence on the part of the priests or priestesses in determining their answer, and the purpose of the use of the tin tablets at Athens was similar. There it was to guarantee that the chairman would not know which of the two alternatives he was putting into which of the two jars.

The Athenian instance is unique among surviving records, and the very fact that the whole procedure was described in such detail in a public decree, instead of merely stating the questions to be asked, certainly implies that it was a highly exceptional method. Why it should have been used on this occasion can only be conjectured, for there is no ancient statement on the subject. Presumably for some reason the Athenians were particularly anxious to exclude any possibility of human collusion in determining the answer. Perhaps this was because feelings were running strongly on the question in Athens. But also the state of affairs at Delphi may have had something to do with it. The Third Sacred War was at its height, Onomarchus had seized the treasures of Apollo, and the rebuilding of the Temple, destroyed in 373, was practically suspended. Hence it would be difficult to suppose that the Delphic oracle was functioning normally, and though the majority of Athenians were sympathetic to the Phocian occupiers of the sanctuary, even they may have felt that in the circumstances it was best on a controversial issue to institute this peculiar confidential method which approximated to asking the Pythia to draw lots between the two unknown alternatives.

The only significant point of comparison between the Athenian consultation of 352 B.C. and the methods at Dodona seems to be the use in very different contexts of inscribed tablets of metal folded for reasons of security. If we seek for other examples of written enquiries at an oracle we have to go to instances later in date than the period of oracular activity at Dodona. Another example is known from an inscription of about 100 B.C. from Corope near the eastern shore of the Pagasaeon gulf in Thessaly.²⁰ There was a local temple of Apollo which was evidently in Hellenistic times under the control of the city of Demetrias and the inscription records a decree of the city regulating the procedure of the oracle which is described as 'ancient and greatly honoured by our ancestors'. It is implicit that the consultations had lately been held in a disorderly way and that the new system is to restore

dignity to the ceremonies. Rules are laid down that the procession is to consist of the priest of Apollo, and one each of the generals and of the guardians of the laws, one council member as treasurer, the secretary of the god, and the prophet. Those not able to attend through illness or absence abroad are to provide substitutes. Three 'rod-holders' are to be enrolled as beadles from the younger citizens and 'are to have authority to restrain the disorderly', for which they are to receive a drachma a day for two days as wages. 'Whenever those aforementioned have arrived at the oracle, and have accomplished the sacrifice in the ancestral manner and the omens have proved propitious, then let the secretary of the god receive after it the entries of those wishing to consult the oracle and let him write up all the names on a whitened board and let him exhibit the board immediately in front of the temple and let him lead in the enquirers calling on them according to the order of each record, unless priority of admission has been conceded to any enquirer. But if the enquirer called on is not present, let him lead in the next, until the enquirer called on arrives. The previously recorded officials are to be sitting down in the sanctuary in an orderly manner in white robes, garlanded with garlands of laurel, purified and sober and receiving the small tablets from those consulting the oracle. When the consultation has been completed, having placed the tablets in a jar, they are to seal it with the seal of the generals and guardians of the laws and likewise with the seal of the priest and are to let it remain in the sanctuary. On the following day the secretary of the god is to bring forward the jar and show the aforementioned seals and open it and give back the little tablets to each calling them up in accordance with the record.' At this point the inscription is tantalizingly broken and after a lacuna of some 24 letters only the words 'the prophecies' can be read. When the decree resumes, it is concerned merely with the beadles and their appointment.

Unfortunately for any research into the procedure at Corope the most vital part of the inscription from this point of view is illegible; otherwise generally the decree was concerned with the dignity of the observance and not with the oracular method. All that appears certain is that on the stated day after an auspicious sacrifice had been offered the enquirers gave in their names and were then called in for consultation of the oracle in the order determined. The consultations which took place in series were concerned with the

handing in of small tablets. We are not told whether these were ordinary writing tablets or were sheets of lead or of other material. This is the point at which the decree is seriously unclear about a procedure which was presumably familiar to those who read it. 'When the oracle had been completed' the tablets were sealed in a jar, and were returned in the same order next day to the enquirers. Here if we are to investigate oracular procedure, everything depends on the exact meaning of the phrase 'when the oracle had been completed'. If one is to understand from this that the whole business of consultation, both enquiry and answer, was settled before nightfall on the first day, then it follows, as Louis Robert has argued,²¹ that the lacuna contained nothing bearing on the oracular procedure, which was already finished. This leaves one with the problem why the tablets are left in the temple sealed in a jar for the night. Robert argues that this was part of the 'Eukosmia'—the good order—which it is the purpose of the decree to regulate. It would, he suggests, have been too late in the day to give them back properly after the sacrifice and the consultation. So the return of the tablets is left till the morning. This explanation is possible, but seems an unsatisfying account. Would it not have been more reasonable for the decree to contain some phrase, such as 'if, when the oracle has been completed, the hour is late'? Also why have apparently all the enquirers to wait a whole night?

In spite of Louis Robert's forceful analysis of the text, one is still led to wonder whether the night itself had some significance in the consultation. Here the obvious example from later literature to cite is the oracle of Amphilochus and Mopsus at Mallus in Cilicia, about which Plutarch in the essay on 'the failure of the Oracle-centres' (c. A.D. 100) tells an interesting story.²² The Roman governor of Cilicia some time before under the influence of some Epicurean doubters had decided to test the oracle. He sent a freedman with a sealed tablet in which the question, unknown to anyone but himself, had been written. The man, 'as was the custom' spent the night in the shrine, and slept and told the following dream. Someone of handsome appearance stood by him and uttered the one word 'black' and no more, but vanished immediately. The governor was dumbfounded at the report and after a gesture of reverence opened the tablet and showed that the question had been 'Shall I sacrifice to you a white bull or a black?' The story may have been piously worked over for the credit of the

oracle, but the main point is that it evidently illustrated a possible procedure, which was customary at Mallus. Enquirers came with sealed tablets (presumably containing either their own or other people's questions), slept in the shrine and by their dreams deduced the answer. This or some similar ritual of 'incubation' was very usual in connection with temples of healing. Evidently at Mallus it could be used normally for general enquiries, and it would be possible to suppose the same method in use at Corope. The fact that the decree contained no detailed instructions about the rite of incubation itself is not a safe base for an *argumentum ex silentio*. The sealing of the enquiries in a jar, if they were already individually sealed, perhaps involves an unnecessary amount of precaution. On the other hand the returning of the tablets to the enquirers the next day was presumably meant to allow them to satisfy themselves that their questions had not been opened or read by any human agent.

If we do not suppose incubation, in the matter of the oracle of Mallus, at Corope, then the only other analogy on which to base an explanation is the method used, according to Lucian, by Alexander of Abonuteichos.²³ This prophet, operating in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, used to receive enquiries on rolls, tied up and sealed. After withdrawing into the sanctuary he called the enquirers in individually and gave them back their rolls still sealed but with the answer written beneath. Lucian, of course, explained the procedure as sheer trickery. Alexander manipulated the documents in various ways so as to remove and replace or to counterfeit the seals. Stählin was prepared to picture the procedure at Corope in this sense.²⁴ He assumes that the tablets were unsealed when put in the jar, and that it was shown next morning sealed to the state officials so that they could vouch that it had been untampered. But the tablets, then, he supposes proved to contain the answers, and suggests that the vase had a double bottom. Louis Robert seems right in demonstrating that this construction has little foundation in the decree. The critical passage is missing, but there is nothing to show that the tablets were miraculously provided with answers. Also in general it is hard to imagine that a Greek state would seriously have authorized by public decree an oracular procedure based on an obvious piece of conjuring or at this date have been so simple as not to recognize the possibility. It is quite another thing to suppose, even on the very prejudiced

testimony of Lucian, that a private individual might perpetuate successfully for some time a piece of charlatanry such as he describes.

Our excursion through the oracles of Apollo at Corope, of Amphilochus at Mallus, and of Alexander at Abonuteichos has covered the chief examples of ancient oracular enquiry by the use of written methods. But it is not likely that any of these examples will help us greatly by analogy in interpreting Dodona and its leaden strips. First of all we can rule out the method of Alexander. The documents as preserved contain questions but not answers, unless in a very few doubtful instances. If the purpose of the use of the lead strip was to receive an answer written on it, obviously their occurrence would be normal and not rare. But there is also a difference from the methods at Corope and Mallus. Always at Corope, and sometimes at least at Mallus, the written enquiry was given back to the enquirer: at Dodona it seems evident that the tablet was not. The relatively large number of tablets found make it incredible that they were all ones which had been left behind by enquirers. This is especially true of the several enquiries from states, of which the embassies would presumably have carried away the tablets, if they had been returned to them. Still more, the tablets frequently show evidence of more than one layer of writing. Evidently they were used and re-used by different enquirers, and the easiest way to explain this is to suppose that after they had been written on by the enquirer and handed in to the priestly authorities they were not returned to the enquirer again, but were issued once more to a second enquirer so that he could write his enquiry on it. Presumably between one employment and the next the tablet was flattened and smoothed so as in a rough way to delete the first enquiry and produce a suitable surface for the second. This probably was yet another reason behind the choice of lead, which is generally not a usual material to write on in antiquity. It was cheap compared to bronze, it was simple to inscribe by scratching, it could be folded to conceal the text and finally it could be smoothed for re-use more easily than another common metal.

How then are we to picture these tablets as used? The best clue is to be found in the passage from Callisthenes which we have already discussed.²⁵ When the Spartan ambassadors were engaged in consulting 'the oracle on the subject of victory, and had duly

placed the vessel in which were the lots, a pet monkey of the King of the Molossi upset the lots themselves and all the rest prepared for drawing lots'. The reasonable interpretation is that the Spartan ambassadors had written an enquiry concerning victory on a leaden tablet and had put this in a jar; perhaps together with other tablets from other enquirers. Presumably if the mischievous monkey had not ruined the ceremony, the main stage of the consultation would have been when the priestess extracted the tablet from one jar and at the same time drew some lot which provided an answer from the same or from some other jar. This kind of procedure would explain several features of the lead tablets. Their small size when rolled up would make them very convenient for dropping into the mouth of a vase and still more convenient for extracting from inside a vase while held in the closed hand. Also the feature of marking the outside of the tablet with a name or a number or a summary reference to the contents is explained. The priestess evidently did not unroll and read aloud the enquiry. In fact, if required, its contents could remain permanently confidential and known only to the god who could presumably comprehend an enquiry even when wrapped up in a roll of lead. All that was necessary was for the tablet to have some identifying mark on its exterior. If the contents were already divulged, this could be a summary allusion. But it could more often be the name of the enquirer or a serial number. If so presumably the priestess would announce, for example, that the god's answer to Callias was favourable or the god's answer to the fifth enquirer was unfavourable.

The use of a jar to hold the enquiries and of metal strips rolled up has analogies from the fourth-century Athenian decree which we have already discussed. The use of the lot at major sanctuaries in the classical period would have seemed much less probable before the discovery of the interesting inscription at Delphi recording a convention governing enquiries from the island of Sciathos.²⁶ This document shows that in the first half of the fourth century B.C. at Delphi there was a tariff for those who consulted the oracle by 'the two beans'. As Amandry has shown in a detailed discussion, this evidently alludes to a method of drawing lots for answers. Presumably different coloured beans gave different meanings: e.g. white for a favourable omen and black for an unfavourable. A great many of the questions recorded on lead from Dodona are so framed that they could be answered by such a

method, for they ask 'whether it is better and more good' that such and such be done. Here a favourable lot would presumably give assent, an unfavourable lot would indicate the negative. The other form of question is sometimes to ask to what god or hero worship is to be paid so as to obtain some result. Here alternative beans of black or white would not be adequate, unless the priestess were herself to have gone through a list of deities and have ascertained approving or disapproving omens for each. Another and easier method would have been if the priestess had a series of beans or other form of counter inscribed with the names of gods and heroes. Then by drawing a selection of these, a reply to the enquiry could be framed.

As Amandry has shown, a certain number of the oracular responses recorded in literature or by inscriptions as coming from Delphi look as though they were obtained by this oracular method rather than by an ecstatic prophecy uttered by the Pythia from the tripod. On the other hand in spite of the extensive excavation of Delphi no single specimen of an enquiry written on lead has ever been found there. It certainly looks as though the methods of making the enquiry at Delphi and Dodona differed. For instance we have no evidence to indicate that at Delphi the enquiry was delivered in writing. It would have been perfectly possible that the whole procedure was oral. The enquirer asked his question: the Pythia drew the lot and gave the appropriate answer verbally. The only references to writing at Delphi appear to be in contexts where the enquirer was acting as an agent, either as the ambassador of a state or the representative of some absent individual.²⁷ In either instance it is easy to see that a written question and a written answer would be a practical measure. But they would only serve as *aides-mémoire* and would not exclude the use of oral question and answer at the moment of enquiry.

Dodona seems here to have been different. The written questions obviously originated from all sorts of enquirers: not only those acting through agents. They were inscribed by the enquirer on a strip of lead supplied by the priesthood, rolled up and handed in. Probably then the priestess placed them in a jar and when extracting the question also extracted simultaneously from the same or another jar the answer. Whether this was delivered verbally or in writing to the enquirer we have no indication from literary or archaeological sources. The replies, if written, would

presumably have been carried away in nearly all instances. So it is not surprising that they have not been found. But perhaps the reply was simply oral: in which case the use of writing for the enquiry was in order to give a greater elaboration to the procedure. It also had the effect that the answer need not be regarded as influenced at all by the priestess's human impulses. For if the question was handed in already folded, the priestess need know no more than the name of the enquirer or some indication to identify the question again, and perhaps a hint whether the answer should be in the form of 'yes' or 'no' or in the form of a deity's name.

Incidentally we have no reference to suggest that the object drawn by the priestess at Dodona to determine the god's answer was a bean. It has been noticed that the famous Italian oracle of Fortune at Praeneste supplies a more likely analogy. There the lots used were a set of *oaken* tablets inscribed in ancient letters which had been originally provided by a miracle. We need not suppose any direct connection between the two places, but it certainly suggests that at Dodona the association of the oracle with the sacred oak could easily and appropriately have been maintained if the signs of approval and disapproval and the names of the proper gods and heroes to receive worship were inscribed on slips of wood cut from the tree itself. In such a procedure the oak could still have been regarded as speaking.²⁸

In connection with the consultation by lot, whether at Delphi or at Dodona it is worth considering a group of artistic representations which Amandry has interpreted in this sense.²⁹ They seem intended to show Cassandra prophesying the fate of Troy to Priam and consist of three frescoes from Pompei and a fragment of a vase decorated in relief, now in Berlin. In all four the prophetess is shown standing veiled and garlanded. Her left arm is by her side. In three of the four, however, the hand itself is extended in an expressive gesture which Davreux has interpreted as prophesying and Amandry as praying. Her right hand in all four is held near the mouth of a vessel which either stands on a table or on a base of its own. The prophetess is looking away from this object with her eyes focused in the distance. An audience to whom she is prophesying is variously represented in the different versions. A man with a spear is common to all scenes: an old bearded man with a child is shown in two. The scene on the frescoes at least is evidently meant to be indoors. In the three frescoes there is a

tripod in the background mounted on a high plinth. In one fresco there is also a statue on a base, and this feature is reproduced in the vase.

Evidently all three frescoes go back fairly closely to some earlier painting, probably by a well-known master.³⁰ The scene on the vase also stems indirectly from the same tradition. It is probably correct that the subject is Cassandra prophesying. Also Amandry has provided much the most plausible interpretation of the prophetess's attitude. She is holding her right hand above the mouth of a vessel and looking away, before plunging in her hand to extract a lot. In one instance only, the artist of the fresco has produced a version which is superficially inconsistent with this. The vessel shown instead of being wide-mouthed as in the other representations is a narrow-necked hydria which could not possibly admit a hand. Probably this was just a piece of carelessness on the part of a thoughtless copyist who reproduced the general pattern of the scene without fully understanding the original conception. Even in this instance, however, as though to make up for his mistake, the artist has added a large open urn standing on the floor below the table.

If the subject is Cassandra it is interesting to note that she differs, for instance, from the tragic heroine of Aeschylus or Euripides in not delivering her prophecies in ecstatic verse, but standing in a dignified pose and drawing a lot. As Amandry correctly suggests, the artist has assigned to Cassandra the actual methods of his own day. But from where are they derived? Amandry, without asserting so positively, is inclined to suggest Delphi: and it is true, as we have seen, that there is evidence there for consultation by drawing beans. But this set of representations provides nothing to indicate the Pythian sanctuary in particular. The tripod on a high base in the background could be a feature of any Greek sanctuary. In fact the association of Dodona with tripods was strong. The statue, again, is of a quite indecisive type. Cassandra herself, of course, had acquired her gift of prophecy from Apollo, but since she exercised it under his curse for having failed to do her part by yielding herself to him, there is no hint in our sources that she made a practice of prophesying in Apolline temples. It seems just as plausible to suppose that the artist who first composed the scene had taken as his model the consultation of the oracle at Dodona. The general style would suggest an original

of the Hellenistic period. At any rate the scene as shown fits better the literary evidence from Dodona than from any other sanctuary.³¹

It is fortunate that the method of written enquiry was employed there, for, thanks to it, we have contemporary evidence for about a hundred and fifty enquiries reaching over more than two centuries. Many of them are fragmentary or so brief and obscurely worded as to raise grave problems of interpretation, but still a certain general picture of the oracle's activity emerges.

Most of the questions are worded in a third person formula which supplies the name of the enquirer. Of those preserved eight can be identified as from Greek states and not private individuals. One is from the Dodonaeans themselves. Two are from one Epirote community and another from an unidentified community, probably Epirote, but the name is lost. Another query was from 'the city of the Chaones,' again in Epirus. The only enquiries preserved from more distant states are two from Corcyra (one in conjunction with Oricum) and one from Tarentum. The private individuals, who make up the bulk of the oracle's business, rarely indicate their state of origin. Probably many came from local communities and did not feel the need to indicate their city-state. Only one Ambraciote and one Athenian actually describe themselves as such. Other enquiries by the form of alphabet or dialect look to be from Corinthian, Chalcidic, Thessalian or Ionian spheres, but such identifications are rather conjectural. Mostly the private enquirer simply put down his own name and did not even define himself by a patronymic. These individuals are nearly always men, but occasionally a wife may be associated with her husband in an enquiry, and at least one woman enquires alone.

The states ask about matters of importance in politics or religion: the Dodonaeans wanted to know whether anyone's impurity was the cause of the bad weather; the Chaones whether they may remove a temple of Athena Polias to a new site. An unidentified community enquires according to what terms will it be safe for them to join the political association of the Molossi. The Tarentines, Corcyraeans, and Oricians asked some general questions about prosperity, while the Corcyraeans on another occasion wanted to know to what god or hero they should pray and sacrifice so as to be of one mind for the common good. In their case the turbulent and grisly history of sedition in Corcyra gives a singular appropriateness to the request.

Private individuals were concerned with all manner of everyday human queries: marriage, children, the recovery of lost property, the choice of a profession. In fact the subjects remind one strangely of two passages in Plutarch where that rather idealistic priest of the Pythian Apollo contrasts unfavourably the oracular business of his own day with that of the storied past.³² Then it was 'cities great in power and kings and tyrants of overweening notions' who consulted the Pythia: 'now it is so and so to ask about the purchase of a slave and thingumbob about his occupation'. The stock questions of private individuals are 'whether to get married, whether to venture on a voyage, whether to risk a loan'. The lead tablets from Dodona provide abundant examples of just these subjects from a period several centuries before the time of Plutarch, and show, as one might suspect, that it was only his romantic idealism that made him suppose that the business of oracles had altered greatly in the course of time. No doubt at all periods the private enquirer with his apparently trivial wishes and anxieties provided the main core of the consultants at Dodona and at Delphi.

The tablets then and the dedications, even apart from the literary evidence, prove that Dodona was active as an oracular sanctuary from the seventh century at least, and probably earlier. If so, what of the buildings in which these sacred rites were performed? Here a most peculiar circumstance presents itself. The archaeological excavation of Dodona, extensive enough, even if not quite complete, has failed to find a trace of a building before the fourth century. It is not merely a matter of showing that the present surviving remains of buildings are of this relatively late date.³³ Even the foundations of structures of the archaic period cannot be traced and, as is perhaps more remarkable, there is a complete absence of roof tiles of the archaic period: a fact which E. Dyggve has stressed as significant. For even if the archaic buildings had been on a small scale and of poor construction and had been swept away in later development, such comparatively indestructible elements as their roof tiles would have been unlikely to vanish without trace.

Carapanos was aware of this problem to some extent, and recognized at least that none of the other buildings which he excavated could be easily identified as the original temple of Zeus. He suggested, instead, it could be found under the Byzantine church which lay in ruins, but considerably preserved, at the eastern end of

the site. But it was the chief achievement of George Soteriades in his one season's excavation in 1920 to have shown that this building was not a pagan temple converted into a church. He demonstrated that everything from the top of the walls to the stylobate, including the columns and antae-capitals, was all purely Christian. Even the columns were never channelled or stuccoed, and the re-used material occasionally found evidently came from elsewhere and was not part of a surviving pagan building on its original site. Underneath the wall of the Christian church, partly beneath it and partly projecting beyond was a building with an axis roughly N.E. and S.W. It appears to be a very small pagan temple (some 17½ feet long by 13½ feet broad). This was a site where Carapanos found ex-votos and some scattered lead tablets. It is now regarded as having been Doric tetrastyle in construction and is dated to the period of the early third century, when under Pyrrhus there was considerable building in many parts of the site.

At any rate the Byzantine church, evidently founded in the late fourth or early fifth century A.D. and rebuilt in the mid-sixth century, does not cover the original archaic temple of Zeus, if such existed, and in fact is probably not on the main sacred site of the pagan sanctuary. So though Dyggve argued on analogy and in theory that this is where it should be found, the facts seem to be against him. Instead it seems that the earliest building is to be identified more centrally in the *temenos* and is a small temple which originally was built in the early fourth century. It faced south and was a plain oblong room with a small porch without columns, covering a total area of some 20 by 13 feet. The site (that of Carapanos' building E) was to be the object of much development and expansion in later periods. But this appears to have been its first stage, and we may be surprised to recognize in it the original and earliest temple of Zeus.

But would we be right to be surprised? After all, our literary evidence has prepared us for the fact that the worship of Zeus at Dodona was originally of a very primitive and quite unhellenic character. The Selloi who sleep on the ground and have unwashed feet are not at all like the priests of other deities whom we encounter in Homer. Also Zeus himself at Dodona took on no usual classical form. His manifestation was a sacred oak tree. Perhaps he even lived in the tree. At any rate it, and not an image, was the outward sign of his presence, and this would not

call for a temple to house it, but at most for a wall or fence to enclose it.

Here it is interesting to recall that apparently puzzling and improbable passage in Demon, the late fourth-century writer on proverbs.³⁴ When explaining the phrase 'the gong at Dodona' he stated that 'the temple of the Dodonaean Zeus had no walls but many tripods near to one another'. It is not clear from the Byzantine paraphrase in which this survives, whether Demon believed that he was describing the temple of his own day or more reasonably the temple as it had been at the origin of the proverb. Certainly by his date in the late fourth century there was a building with a roof and walls at Dodona, but equally certainly it had not been there a century earlier, and the proverb which he seeks to explain could well have arisen in the more primitive times when there was no stone building at Dodona.

The picture of a sanctuary centred in a sacred tree and without any edifice may be hard to imagine. Particularly one might well ask, what of the various archaic dedications which have been found on the site? If they were not housed in a building, how were they preserved? Appropriately enough quite a number of the pieces of archaic bronze belong to tripods. Where they were not actually parts of the tripod itself—legs or bowls—they were ornamental pieces of casting attached for decoration. These tripods could well have stood in the open and weathered the wintry climate of Dodona. Some of the smaller statuettes might have been deposited in the bowls of tripods or even perhaps originally attached to the branches of the tree itself. Where they were found would not necessarily have been their original site in the sanctuary. Doubtless later when buildings were erected, there would be a tendency to move some of the older dedications for storage into them provided they remained within the sacred enclosure. At any rate, there is nothing in the finds of ex-votos to set against the evidence of a temple being erected first in the fourth century B.C.

The oracular methods of Dodona also, so far as we can ascertain them, do not require the existence of a building. The Selloi 'who sleep on the ground' may also have been content to have no solid or permanent roof over their heads. The oak and the doves, if they were the original sources of prophecy, will have functioned in the open air. Even the more sophisticated procedure of enquiry by lot would not in the Greek climate need a building for its

performances. The priestess may originally have used a table set up under the branches of the sacred tree itself. Here we notice the difference from Delphi. The ritual whereby the Pythia sat on a tripod and was induced to speak in a trance was highly unsuitable for open-air performance. The air of mystery and supernatural power with which the proceedings were invested was more effectively produced within the holy of holies of a temple to which the priestess and the enquirers were only admitted after elaborate ritual.

Probably Dodona had been content to surround its sacred oak with tripods and other offerings and with an enclosing wall or fence to separate the consecrated from the secular. At last in the early fourth century, as the influence of classical Greece grew stronger in Epirus, the need was felt for a statue of Zeus as an object of worship. This would carry with it the need for a building, however small, to house the statue, and this will explain the first foundations on the site. In one sense the innovation was an inconsistent alternative to the older practice of worshipping Zeus in his sacred tree, but perhaps the priesthood did not fully comprehend this fact. Also, if as we have seen the method of divination in use for a century or more had been concentrated not on the sacred tree, but on the drawing of lots, the oak itself may have fallen into minor importance in the ritual of the sanctuary, as Herodotus' references suggest.

At any rate from this first architectural beginning in the early fourth century the sacred site became the scene of more and more extensive building operations. First of all in the third quarter of the fourth century a low circuit wall of isodomic masonry was attached to the temple so as to create an oblong court in front of it. This precinct (51 × 47 feet) had its longer dimension at right angles to the temple and an entrance on the south side facing the building. But the curious feature of the arrangement was that the precinct was not sited symmetrically in front of the temple. Its west wall ran close to the line of the west wall of the temple leaving a large area on the east side vacant. It was in this south-east corner that Evangelides found architectural fragments which may have belonged to an altar and finds which suggested dedications. Hence he conjectured that this was the spot where had stood the oak of Zeus itself. It may have been surrounded with a stone curb and have been the centre of a concentration of offerings. That no more

precisely identifiable remains were found is probably to be explained, as at Delphi, by the attacks of Christian zealots. The ground at the spot showed signs of having been disturbed to some depth. Just as in the temple of Apollo an effort seems to have been made to destroy the *Adyton* and the tripod, so probably at Dodona the sacred oak was a special object of destruction and even its roots were extracted and destroyed. The hypothesis that the tree was situated in this corner would also explain the curious relation of the court to the temple. It was designed to enclose the smallest area that would include both the temple and oak even at the sacrifice of symmetry.

For the remainder of the century no important changes were made to the main building at Dodona, but some scholars believe that Alexander, if he had lived, would have erected a large Greek temple on the site. This view depends on an item in the famous list of Alexander's plans, supposed to have been made public and rejected after his death. According to this document he proposed to erect six temples at a cost of fifteen hundred talents each, and Dodona appears following Delos and Delphi in the list. (It is to be presumed, though not actually stated, that the temple in each instance was to be dedicated to the famous deity of the place.) German scholarship has treated this document as authentic and a genuine indication of Alexander's intentions, but I prefer to follow Tarn and believe that it is a late Hellenistic fabrication. If so, the occurrence of Dodona in the list means no more than that its name was familiar to the forger and that it sounded an important and plausible place for Alexander to honour.³⁵

It was probably during the reign of Alexander that the sanctuary at Dodona received the first of a series of smaller temples grouped round the main building. This is the one usually marked with a gamma on plans and lay west of the temple of Zeus. It was built in the Ionic order, tetrastyle, prostyle and had its lower courses in stone and its upper in sun-dried brick. It is probably to be identified as the temple of Dione and the remains of the base of the cult statue which survive must be the place of the image for which the Athenians in accordance with an oracle had provided the face some time soon after 330 B.C.³⁶

The greatest development of the sanctuary came in the early third century under the reign of King Pyrrhus (297-272 B.C.). He evidently had decided to make Dodona the religious capital of his

enlarged empire of Epirus. At this time the temple of Zeus was equipped with a much larger and architecturally more elaborate court. It was practically square in shape and about 70 feet long in each side. There was an inner colonnade of Ionic columns and a small porch on the south side. The asymmetry had been somewhat reduced by the extension, but again a curious feature appears. The inner colonnade was omitted on the east side. The south and west sides had nine columns each, the north, interrupted by the temple had two on one side of it and four on the other, but there were no columns on the east. This architectural anomaly is again best explained, with Dakaris, on the supposition that since the sacred oak stood in this section it made it impossible to continue the colonnade without encroaching on the tree.

This considerable development of the central shrine was only part of a general plan of construction carried out all over the sacred enclosure. Two other smaller temples can be assigned to this period. One has already been mentioned—the Doric tetrastyle building which was later partly covered by the construction of the Byzantine church. Dakaris has identified as belonging to it a fragmentary metope showing Heracles in combat with the Lernaean hydra and therefore proposed plausibly to assign the temple to Heracles.³⁷ The other new temple stood on the west of the main building. Like that of Dione on the opposite side it was Ionic and tetrastyle prostyle. A late third century B.C. inscription on bronze recording a dedication to Aphrodite was found in it, and it is very probable that the temple was consecrated to that goddess. She has no early associations with Dodona, but in the *Iliad* Homer made Dione her mother. So it is likely enough that by the Hellenistic period it appeared appropriate to link Zeus and his consort with Aphrodite in a group of temples.

A greater development, however, than the erection of these shrines was the construction of a vast theatre. This lay to the west at the entrance of the ancient sanctuary, partly excavated out of the hillside, but also on one flank maintained by a colossal supporting wall. The accommodation for spectators was even larger than that at Epidauros. It is evident, of course, that seating on such a huge scale could not have been designed for the normal inhabitants of the valley. Clearly it was meant to provide for an immense concourse attending a festival, and one must assume that the Naia, the original feast in honour of Zeus Naios, was developed

at this point into a typical celebration of the period with the production of plays on a large scale. The reasonable explanation of all this expansion, by which Dodona took on somewhat of the normal character of a major Greek cult-centre, must be that Pyrrhus wished to make it the focus of the religious life of his empire and something worthy to stand comparison with such places in other Hellenistic kingdoms.

The death of King Pyrrhus led to a speedy collapse of his imperialistic expansion, but there are no obvious signs that Dodona itself suffered immediately. The number of lead tablets with enquiries of probably third century B.C. dating suggests that the oracle was active: possibly more so than its great rival, Delphi, which was in decline. But in the autumn of 219 B.C. the sanctuary fell a victim to war. The Aetolians, under their general, Dorimachus, invaded Epirus. They had already shown their willingness to commit sacrilege, for in the spring of the same year on another expedition the Aetolians had sacked the famous temple of Zeus at Dium in Macedon. Now Dodona became the object of their attack, perhaps all the more eagerly as the Aetolian league at this time were the masters of Delphi. Polybius describes how when Dorimachus reached the sanctuary he set fire to the colonnades and destroyed many of the dedications 'and even demolished the sacred house'.³⁸ The signs of the Aetolian incendiaries were found by the modern excavators. The small temple of Dione was burnt and its walls of sun-dried brick collapsed inwards on the floor in scorched heaps. But as Dakaris notes the account in Polybius draws a distinction between the burning of the porticoes and the demolition of 'the sacred house'. By this somewhat unusual phrase Polybius appears to have meant the temple of Zeus and its courtyard, and in choosing it he seems to be indicating that it was not quite a normal Greek temple. Also he seems to indicate that the Aetolians did not burn it, and Dakaris may be right in suggesting that their impiety had stopped short of one extreme offence. If they had set fire to the 'sacred house' as they had done to the porticoes the probable consequence would have been that the sacred oak itself would have perished in flames. This was too awful a crime even for Aetolians, and they contented themselves with destroying the building but spared the venerable tree.

The sacrilegious attack on Dodona did not go unavenged or forgotten. Within a year Philip V, the brilliant young king of

Macedon, invaded Aetolia and sacked the religious capital of the League at Thermum. Polybius records that it was in deliberate vengeance for Dodona, but adds that the Macedonians when overturning statues left those of the gods untouched. It is not the only passage where Polybius in mentioning the Aetolians later recalls their impiety. It was evidently with the help of Philip V, and perhaps even with his spoils from Thermon, that Dodona was soon restored. The temple of Dione was left in ruins, but a new building, no doubt dedicated to the same goddess, was erected a little farther south in the same Ionic style. The 'sacred house' of Zeus was also rebuilt on a grander and more imposing scale and with more resemblance to the usual Greek temple. The main building was extended to cover an area of some 45 by 22 feet and had a pronaos, cella and adyton. The porch was in Ionic style with four columns and the rear of the building projected through the line of the precinct. Also the entrance to the courtyard was converted into a small Propylaion in the form of another Ionic porch. One effect of these alterations was that the temple was extended in such a way as to become symmetrically arranged in relation to its walled precinct. But the same irregularity was still maintained with regard to the colonnade. The cloister ran round three sides, leaving the east free for the sacred tree.

In this period of restoration there was also constructed a large new building just east of the theatre. It was oblong in shape, 110 × 165 feet. Its longer dimension ran at right angles up the slope from the sacred way which passed along its shorter end. Within, there were at least two rows of Ionic columns, and the outer walls were strengthened by buttresses. It has not been fully excavated and its function has not been ascertained. It cannot have been a temple, but since it stood inside the sacred enclosure it is not likely to have been merely secular in purpose. Its position almost abutting on the side wall of the theatre may suggest that, like it, it was used for the celebration of the Naia, perhaps as some kind of festival hall.

Also on the western side of the theatre a stadium was laid out with stone benches arranged on the slope of the hill. These considerable developments suggest that the revival of Dodona after the Aetolian sack may have shown itself more in the development of the sacred festival of the Naia rather than in renewed activity of the oracle. The dearth of leaden tablets assignable to this period would fit with this supposition.

Dodona enjoyed half a century of restored prosperity. Then in 167 B.C. a second and more crushing disaster befell Epirus. It had been allied with Macedon in the final war between Perseus and the Romans. After the battle of Pydna the consul Aemilius Paullus was ordered to punish the Epirotes by systematic ravaging. No less than seven towns were destroyed and 150,000 of the inhabitants were carried off to slavery in Italy and the country was left virtually desolate.³⁹ Excavation has not shown at Dodona the precise effects of the Roman sack. They may have confined themselves to removing statues and dedications, leaving the buildings bare, but undamaged. However, Epirus as a whole never recovered from the blow. The loss of its political freedom and a large proportion of its population must have reacted severely on the activity of the oracle.

Numismatic evidence suggests that Dodona may have preserved its continuity on a religious basis, when the political structure of the country collapsed. The coinage of the League of Epirus ceased as did that of all the individual cities, except Pandosia and Phoenice. But three issues from Dodona are known.⁴⁰ They are in bronze and show on the obverse the head of the Dodonaean Zeus crowned with oak leaves and on the reverse a standing eagle. The inscription is particularly interesting: on the obverse *Menedemus Hiereus*, on the reverse *Argeades*. It indicates that the issuing authority was Menedemus the Priest and by its patronymic appears to show that he claimed to be a descendant of the royal family of Macedon. As Franke proposes, the issues must fall between 167 B.C. and the incorporation of Epirus in the Roman province of Macedon (148 B.C.). These local Dodonaean issues may have been struck to finance the Naia, which apparently continued to be held, and when after 148 B.C. the Epirote League began again to strike in bronze, Dodona seems to have been used as the mint.

One more disaster struck the sanctuary in the next century. In 88 B.C. Thracian tribes acting in alliance with Mithridates in his attack on the Roman provinces invaded Epirus and over-ran the country as far as Dodona where they plundered the shrine.⁴¹ Throughout this period even when Dodona is mentioned in our literary sources there is no reference to the oracle. So it is impossible to prove that it was still functioning except for one highly peculiar piece of inscriptional evidence which may have a bearing on this date. It is a fragmentary iron strigil (athlete's scraper) with

a dedicatory poem in hexameters engraved on its handle.⁴² This is not fully decipherable, but the first lines appear to read:

'To king Zeniketes a prophecy of Dione came: "Your goods and your handiwork will shine through all Greece." He himself having completed with skilful hand [dedicated me.]'

The verses are rather lame and their meaning obscure, but the general sense is that Zeniketes had received an oracular response promising him Panhellenic fame for his craftsmanship and in recognition he dedicated the strigil which was a specimen of his work. The non-Greek name Zeniketes is very rare and the only individual so called who might have described himself as a king was the local chieftain who raised a revolt against the Romans in Lycia and was conquered and destroyed by Publius Servilius Vatia (Isauricus) in 77 B.C. Our literary authorities, of Roman sympathy, describe him as a pirate, but this fact does not exclude the probability that he styled himself 'King'. Also there is no independent evidence that he was in private life a metal-worker, but again we can scarcely regard the silence of our authorities as significant. It has been usual therefore to accept the identification, though it would be possible that the chieftain defeated by the Romans had had an ancestor of the same name who was actually the dedicator. The form of the letters would not be inconsistent with the possibility of an earlier date. However, the probability remains that some time before his conflict with Rome the Lycian chieftain consulted the oracle at Dodona about his handicraft and received some approving response which became the public motive for the dedication of the strigil. It would in my opinion be unwise to attempt to draw any conclusions of a revolutionary kind from the references to the oracle. The attribution of the prophecy to Dione is unique. Sometimes in the enquiries she is associated in the second place with Zeus Naïos, but never elsewhere does she appear alone. Also the form of the prophecy as a hexameter may appear to imply a method of literary presentation quite unlike what we have attributed to Dodona. But presumably the dedicator has allowed himself the liberty of paraphrasing the meaning of the response while putting it into the metre of his poem.

Even if we accept the inscription without too close analysis of its content, there still remains the highly remarkable circumstance that towards the end of the first quarter of the last century B.C. a Lycian chieftain, who ultimately slew himself in face of Roman

conquest, had such close and friendly relations with the distant oracle of Dodona when it must have been generally in decline. Is it possible that Epirus was inclined to be hostile to Rome and that Zeniketes under cover of his relations with the oracle was trying to make contact with possible supporters? The Thracian raid of 88 B.C. should not have been sent to damage enemies of Rome, but the barbarians once they had entered Roman territory probably drew little distinction between opponents. So it is possible that the remnant of the Epirotes was hostile to its former conquerors. But however it is to be explained, the dedication of Zeniketes seems to illustrate the last flicker of the oracle's activity. Strabo, presumably describing conditions early in Augustus' reign, writes of Epirus:⁴³ 'at the present time desolation prevails in most parts, while the parts that are still inhabited survive only in villages and in ruins, and even the oracle at Dodona, like the rest, is virtually extinct'. Augustus had founded a new city at Nicopolis overlooking the site of his naval victory at Actium, but there is no sign that it led to any general re-peopling of the inland territory. However, the festival of the Naia was probably still observed. From the theatre Dakaris recovered fragments of an inscription in honour of the empress, Livia, and at this date or soon after the structure itself was altered so as to convert it into an arena.⁴⁴ Perhaps this was to provide gladiatorial shows and wild beast hunts as entertainment, more to the taste of the Roman ex-soldiers settled in Nicopolis than Greek tragedies.

Dodona's great rival, Delphi, had also sunk low as an oracle in the period of Roman dominance, but from early in the second century it saw a revival, even if only relatively small and not permanent. There is no evidence, however, that Dodona as a religious centre enjoyed anything of the sort. It has been conjectured that the emperor Hadrian in his extensive travels through the Empire visited the place in A.D. 132.⁴⁵ There is no literary source for the supposition, but it would have been possible for him to have passed there on his way from Thessaly to Nicopolis, and one of the altars erected in his honour gave him, besides his usual title of Olympian Zeus, the further epithet Dodonaean. Also Franke has conjecturally assigned to this visit the minting of a bronze coin of which only one specimen is recorded. It showed, obverse, a bust of Zeus, reverse, a horizontal thunderbolt. The inscription is 'Zeus Naos' in the accusative case. If these small

shreds of evidence are connected with a visit by Hadrian, they do not prove that the oracle was revived even on that occasion.

We have already seen how even in the first century A.D. such a famous monument as the cauldron struck by the whip was apparently already damaged and out of action.⁴⁶ In the last years of the second century A.D. Clement of Alexandria could exultantly claim that its silence was an instance of the collapse of the pagan oracles. Pausanias writing about A.D. 160 mentions 'the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona and the oak consecrated to the god' as things worth seeing in Thesprotia and elsewhere lists the oak as the second item in a catalogue of the oldest existing trees.⁴⁷ But he had never visited Epirus and does not include the district in his guide-book. So one may wonder how far this evidence is strictly accurate about the contemporary conditions and how far it is merely copied from some earlier author.

The Naia was still being celebrated as a festival in A.D. 243/4 as was proved by an inscription copied by Cyriacus of Ancona in the early fifteenth century.⁴⁸ His credibility has sometimes been doubted, but in this instance it is completely confirmed since Dakaris has found a fragment of the original stone. So probably the worship of Zeus continued until the establishment of Christianity. Servius' commentary on Vergil, if it could be accepted as historically sound, mentions the destruction of the sacred oak at the orders of Arces, an Illyrian bandit, without giving any chronological setting for the event. But the passage where the statement occurs is seriously garbled in its reference to the oracle: the responses are produced by the murmurs of a sacred spring flowing from the foot of the tree; it is at a temple dedicated to Juppiter and Venus, and is situated in the territory of the Aetolians. Perhaps it is a corrupt echo of the sacking of Dodona by the Thracian Maedi. But a barbarian raid in the latter part of the third or the fourth century is possible. The improbability comes in supposing that such attackers would be greatly interested in destroying the sacred oak. The archaeological evidence which suggests that it was systematically rooted out by somebody points much more plausibly to the Christians. There is evidence for a bishopric at Dodona as early as the council of Ephesus (A.D. 431) and the older parts of the Byzantine church on the site date from the late fourth or early fifth centuries.⁴⁹

NOTES

¹ Rev. Christopher Wordsworth, *Greece*, (London, 1840) p. 250. Some continental scholars, misled by the fact that later editions contain his title as Bishop describe the author as Christopher Lincoln.

² Constantine Carapanos, *Dodone et ses ruines* (Paris, 1878) in two volumes, text and plates.

³ *Bronzen aus Dodona in dem königlichen Museum zu Berlin*. Herausgegeben von Reinhard Kekulé von Stradonitz and Hermann Winnefeld. The bulk of these had come from the collection of Sigismund Mineyko, a Polish engineer, whom Carapanos describes (*Dodone*, p. 2, note 2) as working on the site under his direction. They quarrelled bitterly later over the credit for the excavation.

⁴ Georges Soteriades, *REG*, 34 (1921) 387 ff. Fouilles de Dodone.

⁵ Demetrios Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1929 [1931], 101 ff.; 1930, 52 ff.; 1931, 83 ff.; 1932, 47 ff. Ἡπειρωτικά Χρονικά, 10 (Jannina, 1935), 192 ff. Πρακτικά, 1952 [1955] 297 ff.; 1953 [1956] 159 ff.; 1954 [1957] 128 ff.; 1955 [1960] 169 ff.; 1956 [1961], 154 ff.; 1957 [1962]. *Arch. Eph.* 1956, 1 ff. Ἔργον, 1954 [1955] 25 ff.; 1955 [1956] 54 ff.; 1956 [1957] 64 ff.; 1957 [1958] 42 ff.; 1958 [59] 90 ff. Ἑλληνικά, 15 (1957) 247. Evangelides died in November 1960.

⁶ S. I. Dakaris, Μεγάλη Ἑλληνική Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια Παύλου Δρανδάκη [1950], Δωδώνη, 756-60; *Antike Kunst*, 1963, Das Taubenorakel von Dodona und das Totenorakel bei Ephyra, 35-49; Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον, 16 (1960) [1962] τὸ ἱερὸν τῆς Δωδώνης.

⁷ Evangelides' best summary is in Ἡπειρ. Χρον. 10 (1935) 208 ff. Cf. also Πρακτικά, 1930, 60 ff. and for a discussion, Hammond, *Epirus*, pp. 312 ff.

⁸ Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1953 [1956] 160.

⁹ For a site in the Jannina plain excavated by Dakaris and similarly indicating a prehistoric settlement of shepherds, cf. Hammond, *Epirus*, 299 and for Dodona as such a settlement, 312.

¹⁰ It is possible that some of the twenty-three small votive axes of bronze found by Carapanos may have dated as early as the transition between the Bronze and Iron ages. Cf. Hammond, *Epirus*, 407.

¹¹ Hammond, *Epirus*, pp. 76, 313 and 340.

¹² Rapiér, Carapanos, I, 102 and II, pl. 57, 1. Sword, Carapanos, I, 109 and II, pl. 57, 2. For discussion cf. Hammond, *Epirus*, pp. 319 ff.

¹³ For the Kalbaki site, cf. Dakaris, *AE*, 1958, 115 ff. and V.B. d'A. Desborough, *CAH*, II², Ch. 36, p. 10. Also Hammond, *Epirus*, pp. 329 ff. For the knife from Dodona, Carapanos, I, 108 and II, pl. 53, 7.

¹⁴ Carapanos, I, 97 and II, pl. 53, 4. Hammond, *Epirus*, pp. 331 ff.

¹⁵ Hammond, op. cit. pp. 333 ff.

¹⁶ For this view more recently stated, cf. *BCH*. 79 (1955), 202, and for the first find of a Geometric sherd (late Corinthian), G. Daux, *BCH*, 1965, 777, fig. 12, I owe this reference to N. Coldstream.

¹⁷ See Appendix I.

¹⁸ Carapanos, *Dodone*, pp. 70-83; H. R. Pomtow, Die Orakelinschriften von Dodona (*Jahrbuch für klassische Philologie*, XXIX (1883) 305 ff.); Th. Gompertz, Dodonäische Ährenlese (*Archaeologische-Epigraphische Mitteilungen aus*

Österreich, IV (1880), 59 ff.); R. Kekulé von Stradonitz and H. Winnefeld, *Bronzen aus Dodona*, 39 ff.; Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1929 (1931) 122 ff. (tablets numbered 1 to 18); Πρακτικά, 1930, 89 ff. (tablets numbered 1-3); Πρακτικά, 1932, 49 ff. (one bronze plate with pricked enquiry and lead tablets numbered 1 to 6); Ἡπειρωτικὰ Χρονικά, 10 (1935) 252 ff. (tablets numbered 9 to 41); Πρακτικά, 1952 [1955] 297 ff. (tablets numbered 1 to 26); Πρακτικά, 1956 [1961] p. 155 (one enquiry) and pp. 171-2 (five enquiries); Ἔργον, 1958 [1959] 93 ff. (four enquiries).

¹⁹ IG, 2, 1², 204 (= SIG, 204), Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, II, no. 262.

²⁰ SIG, 1157, First discussed in this connection by Otto Hoffmann, *GDI*, II, 95.

²¹ L. Robert, *Hellenica*, V (1948), 16 ff.

²² Plu. 3, 434 d.

²³ Lucian, *Alex.* 19 ff.

²⁴ Stählin, P.W.s.n. Korope.

²⁵ Callisthenes, *F.Gr. Hist.* 124 f. 22 (a) and (b). Cf. *supra*, p. 33.

²⁶ P. Amandry, *BCH*, LXIII (1939), 184 and *La mantique apollinienne à Delphes*, 33 ff.

²⁷ Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 33 and note 69.

²⁸ For the legend of the oak *sortes* at Praeneste, Cic. *de Div.*, 2, 85. For the analogy with Dodona, e.g. Franke, *Münzen*, 320, note 28.

²⁹ P. Amandry, *Mantique*, 74 ff. and pl. 5. Cf. Juliette Davreux, *La légende de la prophétesse Cassandre d'après les textes et les monuments* (Bibl. de la faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège, fasc. 94, 1942).

³⁰ If a connection with Dodona rather than with Delphi is accepted, one might conjecture that the original painting had been in Ambracia, and was removed to Rome from there as part of the spoils in the sack of the city in 189 B.C. This would, if necessary, account for its availability as a convenient subject for copying in Italy.

³¹ Curiously enough there is an indirect connection between Cassandra and Dodona. Carapanos, *(Dodone)*, I, 39 and II, pl. 22) published among his finds a bronze tablet recording the offering made to Zeus by Agathon, the son of Echephylos, of Zacynthos, who described his family as 'proxenoi of the Molossians and their allies in thirty generations from Trojan Cassandra.'

³² Plu. 3, 386 c, 407d, 408c. Cf. Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 393 ff.

³³ For the original accounts of the buildings, cf. notes 2, 4 and 5, *supra*. The first attempt to produce a critical synthesis of the results was by Ejnar Dyggvæ, *Arkaeologiske og Kunsthistoriske Afhandlinge Tilegnede Frederick Poulsen*, 7, 3. 1941, København (1941), 95 ff. *Dodonaeiske Probleme*. It has been largely superseded by the recent publication of S. J. Dakaris; cf. note 6 above.

³⁴ Demon ap. St. Byz. s.v. Δωδώνη. Cf. *supra*, p. 86.

³⁵ D.S. 18, 4, 4. Cf. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, II, appendix 24, pp. 378 ff.

³⁶ Cf. *infra*, p. 142.

³⁷ Dakaris, *AD*, 16 (1960) p. 7, n. 7. Cf. Evangelides, *AE*. 1929, p. 111.

³⁸ Pol. 4, 67, 3. For the recollection of the sack of Thermum, 5, 9, 2 and for later references, 5, 11, 2 and 8. D.S. 26, 17 (*Exc. de virt. et vit.*) also records the burning of the sanctuary at Dodona πλὴν τοῦ σηκοῦ.

³⁹ Pol. 30, 16 (Str. 7, 7, 3); Livy, 45, 34; Plu. *Aem.* 29.

⁴⁰ Franke, *Münzen*, 308.

⁴¹ D.C. 30-35, fr. 101, 2.

⁴² Carapanos, I, p. 107, II, pl. 26, no. 8. The revised reading comes from Th. Gomperz, *AEMO*, 5 (1880), 130 ff. For Zeniketes, cf. Str. 14, 5, 7 and *CAH*, IX, 334 (H. A. Ormerod).

⁴³ Str. 7, 7, 9.

⁴⁴ Dakaris, *AΔ*, 16 (1960), 35-36.

⁴⁵ P.W. 1, col 512 (Aelius Hadrianus) citing as evidence *CIG*, 1822, which does not appear to have been included in *IG*, IX. For the bronze coin attributed to the occasion, Franke, *Münzen*, Group IV.

⁴⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 88 and Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Paus. 1, 17, 5 (the things worth seeing in Thesprotia) and 8, 23, 5 (the oak coming second to the willow tree of Hera on Samos). For similar lists of oldest trees, omitting the oak of Dodona, cf. Thphr. *HP*, 4, 13, 2 and Pliny, *HN*, 16, 234.

⁴⁸ Cyriacus of Ancona, *BCH*, 1 (1877), 294. Dakaris' find, *BCH*, 89 (1960), 744.

⁴⁹ Servius in Verg. *Aen*, 3, 466. Cf. *supra*, p. 67. Schol. Lucan, 3, 179 describes the destruction as 'ab Laconibus' emended by some editors to 'ab latronibus'. For the Byzantine church, see Dakaris, *AΔ*, 16 (1960), 36.

CHAPTER VII

THE RESPONSES OF DODONA IN LITERATURE

If we turn to consider the particular responses of the oracle of Zeus at Dodona, as known from literary or epigraphic sources, we have already seen from Homer and the three tragedians stories about enquiries which can only be treated as legendary and merely serve to illustrate the fame of the oracle in the writer's day. When we look for historical examples the first period when we might hope to find them would be in the age of colonization: a time when the Pythian Apollo first established his importance as a source for prophetic guidance. Cicero evidently had come across some predecessors—probably Stoic writers on religion—who had grouped the oracles of Zeus with those of Apollo in this activity. He expresses it rather rhetorically: 'What colony indeed did Greece send to Aeolia and Asia and Sicily and Italy without a prophecy from Pytho or Dodona or Ammon?'¹ But our extant sources record no foundation oracles for Ammon, and it would be in the last degree unlikely that this Libyan centre which only became known familiarly to the Greeks in the late sixth century would have had any influence in the colonizing period. For Dodona the position is not much different. Elsewhere we shall discuss a legend of the Hellenistic period representing Zeus as responsible for settling the prophetic families of the Galeotae in Sicily and the Telmissans in Caria.² The only legend about a Greek foundation connected with Dodona is that of Corinth. That city, as Wade-Gery says, 'knew no Temenid founder, but a Heraclid of her own, Aletes, who came by sea'.³ It is appropriate, therefore, that while the return of the Heraclidae was linked with Delphi by a whole series of oracles, Aletes is represented as obtaining his divine authority from Dodona. The most elaborate form of the legend⁴ described how Aletes consulted the oracle of Zeus about the Corinthian kingship and received a response that he would conquer whenever someone gave him a clod of earth and he should make his attack on a day of

many garlands. So he came to Corinth as a beggar (which was appropriate as his name literally means 'Wanderer') and asked a country man for bread, who took up a clod and gave it to him as a rustic jest. This fulfilled the first part of the prophecy. The accomplishment of the second part came when Aletes approached the city on a festival dedicated to the dead. Evidently the citizens all came out with many garlands to put on their family tombs. Aletes encountered the two daughters of Creon (presumably the 'ruler' of Corinth) and made a pact to wed the younger if she would betray the city to him. This she did, and he named the city 'Corinth of Zeus' in honour of the god who had given him the oracle.

This complicated story is evidently put together out of various elements. The motive that a clod of earth could convey the sovereignty of the land, and particularly that it could do so mystically where it was not actually intended by the giver recurs in a number of foundation legends connected with the Delphic oracle.⁵ Evidently it was a traditional folk-tale and as a pattern goes back into the archaic Greek period. The ambiguity of the 'day of many garlands' is not of quite such a primitive type, but is a usual sort of response to attribute to an oracle. The two elements probably did not originally belong together, and in fact the phrase 'Aletes accepts even a clod' circulated separately as a proverbial saying with the first half of the story only attached to it as an explanatory legend. This form is evidenced as early as the late fourth century when it is quoted from Duris of Samos.⁶ In the extended version the phrase to be explained by the story is not 'the clod of Aletes', but 'Corinth of Zeus'. As we have seen, it was suggested that Aletes had named the city so in honour of the god who had given him the oracle. But these words were actually an old catch phrase which already early in the fifth century was treated by Pindar as half-intelligible gibberish. It was usually explained instead as meaning 'Corinthos son of Zeus', and it was alleged that the Corinthians in pride were constantly referring to their heroic founder in this way to the boredom of the rest of Greece.

Probably the story of Aletes and the clod of earth is the core of the legend, and it may go back to archaic periods. The phrase itself could be the end of a hexameter verse, which may suggest that it had taken shape in one of the Corinthian epics. If so, it is not very surprising that Dodona was chosen as the oracular centre to which the legend was attached—Delphi and the Pythia were

most closely associated with the Spartan Heraclids, while Aletes represented instead a divergent local Corinthian version of the Dorian invasion. Also the Corinthian movements of trade and colonization to Corcyra and north-west Greece in the late eighth century must have brought them within the sphere of Dodona at an early date. So though the legend cannot contain authentic history, it is probably to be taken as evidence of ancient contact between Corinth and the Epeirote oracle. For that matter we cannot regard it as necessarily unpalusible that the story implies a form of response other than that given by drawing lots. It may have been evolved before the lot-oracle had become the typical method at Dodona.

One other legend gives a very circumstantial telling of an oracle given by Dodona to the Athenians and its later fulfilment. In or about the reign of Apheidias—after Theseus, but before the end of the Attic kingship—a prophecy came to Athens from Zeus: 'Beware, then, of the hill of Ares and the altars of the Eumenides, rich in incense, where it is fated that the Lacedaemonians, when hard pressed by the spear, become your suppliants. See that you do not slay them with steel nor treat the suppliants wrongfully: for suppliants are holy and sacred.'⁷ This is written in a typical quatrain of hexameter verses and has the stylistic features usual in the responses attributed to the Pythia. Its wording is not specially archaic and certainly does not suggest the period before the Dorian invasion.

Pausanias goes on to relate that the Athenians subsequently recalled this prophecy when the Peloponnesians had invaded Attica in the reign of Codrus. According to the well-known story, Codrus' voluntary death had fulfilled another oracle, one delivered by the Pythia, and this had assured victory to the Athenians. In consequence, as Pausanias explains, all the other Peloponnesians had retreated from Attica. But some Spartans had already managed to enter Athens secretly by night, and when next day they found themselves deserted by their allies, they took refuge on the Areiopagus and at the altars of the Eumenides. The Athenians, therefore, in accordance with the Dodonaean oracle, allowed these Spartans to retire unhurt. Pausanias concludes his narrative by contrasting the pious behaviour of the Athenians with their later treatment of Cylon's conspirators when they were suppliants in the same place.

The story is, of course, a mere legend, and the oracular response cannot date authentically from early Attic history. But they form together an unique episode. The oracle itself is never quoted by any other author and, while the story of Codrus is frequently mentioned in ancient literature, these Spartan suppliants never appear elsewhere. Evidently the oracle and the story of its fulfilment form a unity. It might have been composed to provide a moralistic contrast to the episode of the Cylonian blood-guilt. But the present writer twenty-five years ago suggested another explanation, which though it involves a certain amount of conjecture, still seems to him plausible. If we suppose that the oracle was invented first, the only circumstances which would provide occasion for its composition would be the invasion of King Cleomenes and his siege within the Acropolis in 508 B.C. This lasted for three days after which he and all the Spartans who accompanied him were allowed to leave Attica under a truce. Evidently the oracle in Pausanias is framed in the strongest terms to induce the Athenians to spare Spartans when supplicating the Eumenides. It is not recorded that the followers of Cleomenes actually reached this point, which the Cylonian conspirators had done in similar circumstances. But it might have been in anticipation of such a final step that Cleomenes produced the oracle, and in negotiations disclosed it to the Athenian besiegers. One may note that Cleomenes was notoriously credited with expertise in oracles. Not only do they play a prominent part in his career at several points, but also Herodotus actually records that he 'had taken possession of the oracles which the Peisistratidae had previously owned, from the Athenian Acropolis. For when they were expelled (in 510 B.C.) they had left them behind in the temple and Cleomenes had taken them up'.⁸ So Cleomenes would have been in a position two years later to claim that he could reveal state oracles of Athens otherwise unknown. In fact Herodotus represents Cleomenes as doing exactly this when later as a justification for restoring Hippias he claimed to bring forward prophecies from the Acropolis which foretold that Athens would be a special danger to Sparta. So such a use of an oracular response as we have suggested would be quite typical of Cleomenes' methods.

Also one may note the fact that the oracle is attributed to Dodona and suggest a reason why Cleomenes might have chosen to assign his invention to that centre. Delphi had been particularly

favourable to the Alcmaeonidae, and had been the source of oracular support for their original restoration to Athens. Hence it might have been particularly difficult for a forger to appeal to the authority of Delphi against Cleisthenes. Moreover, just as the Alcmaeonidae were the favourites of Delphi, so Pisistratus and his sons appear to have had no important relations with that oracle. Hence a response alleged to be extracted from the Peisistratid archives would have greater plausibility if attributed to some other source.

One can suppose therefore that what happened was as follows: Cleomenes on finding himself besieged on the Acropolis saw that there was no hope of escape or rescue and decided to prepare the ground for his inevitable capitulation. The fate of Cylon's conspirators had shown that it was not safe to trust to the general sanctity of Athena or the Eumenides. So with a view to reinforcing this appeal for asylum, he forged the present document and caused it to be circulated to the Athenians. Whether it had any actual influence on the negotiations leading up to the release of the Spartans, one cannot tell. As we have said, our authorities do not describe Cleomenes as a suppliant of the Eumenides. Probably he held this in reserve as a last resource: to evacuate the Acropolis and take refuge in the sanctuary of the Eumenides on the Areiopagus. This action would only involve the crossing of a short stretch of 'no man's land' between the Enneapylon and the sanctuary.

At any rate, having once been put into circulation, the oracle found its way, together with other miscellaneous prophecies, into the collections of the oracle-mongers. In them it would be noted simply as 'an Oracle of Zeus at Dodona given to the Athenians', and thus would have lost its original context. Then one may conjecture that in the Hellenistic period some scholar found it and sought to interpret it as a historic document. Without knowing its proper context, his impulse would be to put it in the legendary periods of Athenian history and by a little romancing he could give it a setting in the Dorian invasion of Attica. But even he did not supply any explanation of the enquiry at Dodona which had called forth this peculiar response. Pausanias had encountered the oracle in this literary source and inserted it in his book. He had a particular interest in oracles and prophecies; a subject in which he claimed to be specially well read. Hence it is not surprising to find that he is the only author to have preserved

this remarkable example of a prophecy fraudulently attributed to Dodona.

The two instances when our literary authorities recorded alleged consultations of the oracle in the sixth century B.C. both occur in Herodotus. One is the famous passage⁹ where he describes Croesus' test applied to the various prophetic shrines of his day which resulted in the complete justification of Delphi in preference to all the rest. There can be no doubt that this legend is simply an invention of the priests of the Pythian Apollo, and it supplies no sound evidence for the consultation of either Dodona or Ammon at this date.¹⁰ Ammon is discussed elsewhere: as to Dodona archaeological evidence would certainly suggest that while in the mid-sixth century enquirers may have come from West Greece and the Peloponnese it is most unlikely that the oracle was consulted by states as distant as the Asia Minor coast and Lydia.

The other Herodotean story of an enquiry, though also open to suspicion, is at least connected with a probable neighbourhood.¹¹ He tells it in a typical fashion as explaining the credentials of Deiphonus who acted as prophet to the Greek expedition to Mycale in 479 B.C. Deiphonus' father was Evenius, a native of Apollonia on the Illyrian coast. There the city maintained a flock of sheep dedicated to the Sun God; the unusual custom was, of course, said to be prescribed by an oracular response, which is not otherwise recorded. When they were in the keeping of Evenius, sixty of them were killed by wolves. He was held responsible and was blinded by the citizens in punishment. Thereafter a curse of barrenness smote their flocks and the land in general. Both Dodona and Delphi were consulted and agreed in replying that it had been wrong to blind the guardian of the sheep. The gods themselves, they were told, had inspired the wolves' attack, and divine vengeance for the wrong would harry Apollonia till they made an atonement to Evenius of whatever kind he selected. Also when these things were accomplished the gods would themselves give Evenius such a gift that many men would count him fortunate. The men of Apollonia accepted this judgement and managed to buy off Evenius comparatively cheaply by the mean trick of asking what compensation he wanted without first informing him that the oracles had insisted on his receiving it. However, the gods themselves gave him an additional bounty as they had promised—the gift of prophecy.

The story has obviously been worked up into a tale which would provide Deiphonus with unique credentials as the son of a prophet specially singled out by divine favour. It is scarcely possible to decide what kernel of truth may remain in it. But the most suspicious feature is the conjunction of Dodona and Delphi in a combined prophecy. In the sixth century there is every reason to suppose that the two oracle-centres were bitter rivals and it is equally improbable that accidentally or in collusion they would have produced the same oracle. If we decide that in fact it must have come from only one of the two, it is practically impossible on *a priori* grounds to decide which. Dodona was geographically convenient to the inhabitants of Apollonia and they might plausibly have consulted it in emergencies. But also as a colony of Corinth sent out in Cypselid times when the dynasty had close relations with Delphi and the city itself was named after Apollo, it is reasonable to conjecture that its foundation was blessed by the Pythia, and that later enquiries from the colonists were addressed to her. So a good case can be made out for either oracle-centre, but their combination was probably invented by Deiphonus or his father so as to justify his claim to prophetic powers the more strongly. Hence, while it is quite possible that the men of Apollonia consulted Dodona in the latter part of the sixth century, the legend of Evenius is not satisfactory evidence in itself.

The first half of the fifth century is no better off in historic instances. The only one recorded occurs in Plutarch's *Life of Themistocles*.¹² There he gives a rather romanticizing account of the visit of the exiled Athenian to the court of Persia, and represents him as adding a supernatural authority to his appeal to the Great King by describing that he had been commanded by the oracle of Zeus of Dodona to travel to him who had the same name as the god. For, as he explained, both Zeus and the Persian monarch were great and were called kings. It is only too easy to imagine appropriate occasion for Themistocles to have visited Dodona. In his flight from the Peloponnese he went first to Corcyra and then to Epirus, and Thucydides¹³ gives a beautiful description of the old-fashioned ritual by which he claimed asylum with Admetus, King of the Molossi. Thucydides does not mention where Admetus' palace was, nor does he record a consultation of Dodona. Themistocles might well have taken the opportunity to acquire some oracular support. But it is much more likely that the

appeal to the Persian king, as recorded by Plutarch, is part of some elaboration of the original story concocted by a Hellenistic romancer. The response itself involves one of those mild verbal equivocations which are typical of Greek stories about oracles, but not appropriate to the prophetic mechanism of Dodona. So the story is best rejected.

There is no other instance of a consultation of Dodona recorded till we come to the Sicilian expedition. That great undertaking, as we shall see, was traditionally the subject of enquiries at Delphi and Ammon as well as at Dodona.¹⁴ The unsatisfactory relations with the Pythian Apollo in the first half of the Peloponnesian war may well have encouraged the Athenians to seek for other sources of prophecy. But also the course of the war itself had brought Athens into closer contact with Epirus. This showed itself in an inscription found at Dodona. It is marked on a strip of bronze in Attic lettering and records 'The Athenians from the Peloponnesians having won a naval victory made this dedication.'¹⁵ The object itself is lost, but it is reasonable to accept the conjecture that it was an offering made to celebrate Phormio's victory over the Peloponnesian fleet at the mouth of the Corinthian gulf (429 B.C.). Presumably it seemed wise to win public opinion in Epirus by making a dedication to Zeus. If so, it is not surprising that fourteen years later Athens sought his approval for the Sicilian expedition. The reply as recorded for us in late sources is worked up into a moral tale. The oracle told the Athenians to attach Sicily to the city or in another version to settle Sicily with inhabitants.¹⁶ In either instance the solution was found in a typical ambiguity. Instead of the island Zeus had meant a moderately sized ridge near Athens which had the same name. Therefore instead of venturing on vast overseas expeditions the Athenians should have understood the god's instruction to add it to the city or occupy it. The moral which later philosophers found in the story was that one should not disregard what was near at hand and put one's ambitions on fantastic objectives in the distance. Of course in this form the story is fictitious, but it is not impossible that here, as in the case of the enquiry at Ammon, an improbable solution was invented to explain away the fact that Zeus had approved of the Sicilian expedition. The method of enquiry used was presumably that indicated by the lead tablets found at Dodona. The Athenian embassy would have asked some such enquiry as: 'Is it better and more

good for the Athenians to send an expedition to Sicily?', and will simply have received an affirmative indication. Later, when the expedition ended in disaster, it was incumbent on the prophets in Athens to explain the anomaly, and recourse was had to a typical legend of equivocation. In the process the exact form of the original enquiry would tend to be distorted to suit the explanation.

The next enquiries recorded all concern Spartans or the Spartan state. Lysander, when in 403 B.C. the Spartan kings combined against him, traditionally tried to get the support of the chief oracles for a change in the Spartan kingship which would lay it open for his election. Elaborate stories were told about his plans to work the Delphic oracle and, as we shall see, he went in person to Ammon to consult Zeus there. But he is also recorded to have made an attempt to win support at Dodona.¹⁷ Apparently he did not come to consult the oracle himself, but, as we are told, he made his enquiry through the agency of one Pherecrates of Apollonia who was on intimate terms with those engaged in the work of the temple. But the attempt to corrupt the priestesses of Dodona to support his cause was a failure. What kind of answer the oracle gave him, if any, is not recorded.

The next authentic instance of a Spartan enquiry at Dodona took place immediately before the battle of Leuctra¹⁸ and was the occasion when the pet ape of the king of the Molossi disturbed the oracular apparatus. This has been already examined for the evidence which it gives on the method of consultation.¹⁹ It is also interesting as the first occasion when an official enquiry at Dodona from the Spartan state is recorded. Ever since the Spartan expedition to Acarnania in 389 B.C. they had taken a lively interest in the north-west. In 371 B.C. they were in touch with Delphi through the Spartan army in Phocis under Cleombrotus. The temple of the Pythian Apollo had been destroyed a bare two years previously by a landslide occasioned by an earthquake. So formal consultation of the Pythia was probably impossible. But presumably some form of enquiry could have been made. However, the Spartans may have thought it desirable instead to win diplomatic support in their rear by consulting the oracle at Dodona and securing a favourable response. Alcetas, king of the Molossi, had joined the Second Athenian confederacy a few years before, but Athens' influence there may have begun to wane at the prospect of a common peace. Anyway the unforeseen intervention of the

ape upset the whole consultation. However, the fiasco in 371 B.C. does not seem to have discouraged the Spartans. In or before 367 B.C. they consulted Dodona again about their prospects of military success and received a much more encouraging answer.²⁰ They were told that the war would be 'tearless'. The fulfilment of this prophecy was seen in 367 B.C. when a Spartan army under Archidamus, reinforced by barbarian mercenaries sent by Dionysius I, had been on an expedition into Arcadia. On their way back they were cut off by a strong force of Arcadians and Argives, but rallied and broke through the enemy inflicting heavy losses on them without a single Spartan killed. This success was recognized as the 'Tearless Battle'. Our evidence for it in this connection probably goes back to Ephorus, a contemporary. Curiously enough, Xenophon, also a contemporary and writing earlier, records the military success and the fact that no Spartan was killed, but makes no mention of the oracle.²¹ This is the more remarkable since Xenophon was a very religious man with a strong conviction of the authority of prophecies. Still more remarkable is the fact that he does record tears in connection with the battle, for according to his account: 'Archidamus immediately sent Demoteles the herald home to announce the greatness of the victory and that not even one of the Spartans was killed, but multitudes of the enemy. They told how those in Sparta when they heard the news beginning from Agesilaus and the elders and the ephors all of them wept: so common are tears to joy and grief alike.' It is hard to believe that Xenophon would have written in this way about the reception given to the victory, if he had heard of it as the 'Tearless Battle'. It looks as though the association of it with this title and the use of it to provide the fulfilment of the oracle were later developments. Of course, it would be possible to argue that the oracle itself was an invention, particularly as the method of divination used at Dodona did not lend itself readily to these verbal details in the responses. But it is not impossible that the priestess of Zeus at the original consultation had drawn lots which signified that the war would be without loss and that this was later worked up into the story in the form which Ephorus recorded.

This is the last recorded instance of a Spartan enquiry at Dodona. The Athenians, however, continue to appear more and more in our literary sources as consulting the oracle. Already in

his last publication, the pamphlet on taxation, Xenophon in 355 B.C. had put Dodona and Delphi on equal footing and in that order. After sketching his programme of reforms he concludes:²² 'If, indeed, you should decide to do these things, then I would for my part advise that you send to Dodona and to Delphi and enquire of the gods whether it would be better and more good for the city if it were thus organized both for the present and for the time to come, and if they agree to this, then again I would say that we ought to ask whom of the gods we should associate with us so that we might have the best and fairest success, and whomsoever of the gods they answered, to them we should rightly offer auspicious sacrifices and begin the undertaking.'

Xenophon was, as we have said, a pious man with a great respect for oracles, and in earlier days had consulted the Pythian Apollo on more than one occasion. This was the first time when he had mentioned Dodona. It may have been because of the awkward political and military position. The Phocians had just occupied the Delphic sanctuary and, while the Sacred war had not yet been declared against them, it must have been obvious that consultation of the oracle there might be difficult. So Xenophon seems to have offered Dodona as a convenient alternative.

The Athenian state did not adopt Xenophon's proposals, but they consulted Zeus more than once in this period. For instance in 347 B.C., when writing the speech against Meidias, Demosthenes wished to emphasize the ritual importance of the chorus in the Dionysiac festival and for this purpose he quoted oracles both of the Pythian Apollo and of Zeus.²³ We have already considered the latter because, if authentic, it is perhaps a unique instance of the correct form of a Dodonaean response. Here it is sufficient to note that Demosthenes quotes two answers apparently delivered on different occasions, but since it is not relevant to his purpose gives no dates nor context for the enquiries. All that can be said is that Athens appears to have consulted Zeus twice on ritual matters before 347 B.C. and probably not very long before that date.

This was not the only occasion when Demosthenes made use of Dodona in a speech for the prosecution. In 344 B.C. when charging Aeschines with treason he read oracles to the jury in his peroration with a view to pressing home the point that they must be on their guard against politicians who grew too strong for the democracy.²⁴ Unfortunately in this instance our manuscripts do not quote the

responses. They can only be reconstructed in part from Demosthenes' comments. Evidently they began by some slightly ambiguous warning that the Athenians 'must be on their guard against their leaders'. As the orator explains, if the oracles had been given while they were at war the generals would have been meant: but if it was after peace had been made, those in charge of political affairs. This was the meaning which he sought to extract from the prophecy. He ends by quoting: 'and you must keep the city together so that all have one resolve and do not give your enemies cause to rejoice'. So far Demosthenes had not indicated from what oracle-centre these words had come and in fact by referring to the prophecy sometimes in the plural and sometimes in the singular he left it unclear whether for his particular purposes he had combined bits of different responses. But his final remark appears to attribute the advice to Dodona for he sums it up by saying: 'Therefore to all the encouragement is given that with one resolve they should punish those who do any service to their enemy; this is the word of Zeus, of Dione, and of all the gods.' The emphasis of this concluding sentence suggests that we are dealing with an oracle from Dodona, but it is not excluded that Demosthenes was also using one or more from elsewhere.

The derivation from Dodona is confirmed by the fact that this response was used again in an Athenian law court twenty years later when Demosthenes himself was the defendant. The prosecutor was Dinarchus and he caused to be read in conjunction the decree proposed by Demosthenes after the battle of Chaeronea and 'the oracle that came from Dodona from Dodonaean Zeus: for clearly he foretold to you long since that you should be on your guard against your leaders and advisers.'²⁵ Evidently also the prophecy contained the same point about the need to be of one resolve for Dinarchus emphasized this in his comment. The only detail which is not reproduced on the second occasion is the reference to giving cause to the enemies to rejoice, but this omission may be merely accidental. Clearly what had happened was a not unusual practice in fourth-century trials; the oracle of Zeus warning against the leaders was coming to be treated as a commonplace which could conveniently be inserted in a speech prosecuting a politician in order to rouse the superstitious feelings of the jury.

If we turn back to the original context in Demosthenes it is

interesting to try to conjecture the circumstances in which Dodona had been consulted. Demosthenes gives no indication as to date. Dinarchus refers to it as spoken 'long since', but that would be satisfied if it was delivered shortly before its first appearance in our authors which would be more than twenty years previously. Demosthenes' phrase with regard to the question whether it referred to generals or politicians as 'the leaders' is vaguely worded, but suggests that the response was given after peace had been made. This could best be interpreted of the peace of Philocrates contracted two years earlier. It had been followed immediately by Philip of Macedon's occupation of Delphi. Athenian feeling had been deeply outraged at this act and at the simultaneous punishment of the Phocians for impiety against Apollo. Demosthenes himself, while whipping up feeling against those Athenians responsible for the peace, had to exercise care not to drive Athens into war with Philip. However, the city showed its resentment by refusing to send delegates to the Pythian games of 346 under Philip's presidency, and the Delphians on their side deprived the Athenians of their traditional right of precedence in consulting the oracle. It would not be surprising if in these circumstances Athens abstained from making official enquiries at Delphi for a year or two, but instead sent a sacred embassy to Dodona. The enquiry no doubt was couched in general terms: 'How would the state of the Athenians fare best in the present and for the future'; and the advice of Zeus was equally general, warning them against being misled by their leaders and impressing on them the need for unanimity. How exactly such words were extracted by the priestess is uncertain, but she might have had a series of appropriate moralizing sentences of a general kind from which to draw.

In the *De Corona* in 330 B.C. Demosthenes refers to another response of Zeus of Dodona in which he declared that the presiding 'luck' (the Tyche) of the city of Athens was good.²⁶ This conception of the 'luck' of a city or an individual was a comparatively recent development in Greek thought and was to become increasingly prominent in the Hellenistic period. Demosthenes gives no context for the enquiry, but we can conjecture that after 346 and particularly when relations with Delphi were difficult, the Athenians had consulted Dodona instead. For instance in 332 B.C. in consequence of an incident involving bribery at the Olympic games on the part of an Athenian athlete, Delphi refused to allow

the Athenians to consult the oracle, until they paid a penalty.²⁷ It is not surprising, then, if relations between Athens and Dodona continued to be close and became even more friendly.

That this was so is illustrated by a passage in Hyperides' defence of Euxenippus.²⁸ This speech was delivered at some date between 330 and 324 B.C. and in it Hyperides mentions that 'Zeus of Dodona had commanded the Athenians in an oracle to decorate the image of Dione. So the Athenians had made a face for the image and all that went with it as beautifully as possible and had prepared much costly ornament for the goddess and had dispatched a sacred embassy with a sacrifice at great expense'. But though the Athenians had fulfilled the oracle in magnificent style, their pious act had one hostile reaction. Olympias, Alexander's mother, and at the time the regent of Epirus, sent an indignant letter to Athens protesting that the land of the Molossi in which the sanctuary stood was hers and that the Athenians had no business to interfere with anything there.

Evidently the consultation of the oracle which led to this Athenian dedication at Dodona had taken place recently after the death of Alexander king of the Molossi. We have already seen in a response quoted by Demosthenes an instance of Zeus asking for gifts from the Athenians. Evidently again when Athens had sent some enquiry about its future, the god had replied with the instructions to decorate the image of Dione. Beside the main sanctuary of Zeus there has been found a small temple on the west which probably was dedicated to Dione.²⁹ The date of this building has been put in the latter part of the fourth century B.C., and the passage in Hyperides certainly suggests that the shrine of Dione was already under construction and that the oracle had called in the Athenians to provide the cult-statue. It was presumably of human size or larger and would appear to have been acrolithic—i.e. with wooden framework covered with drapery and head, hands and feet of stone. The Athenians provided the face with the accompanying headdress, earrings, necklace and so forth: an expensive offering. Evidently this co-operation between Athens and Dodona roused the indignation of Queen Olympias. She was notoriously a woman of fiery temper, but she may not have been quite mistaken in seeing this rapprochement as more than merely religious activity. After Chaeronea, as well as before, Athens had looked to north-west Greece as a possible source of support and

assistance against Macedon, and it is likely enough that in cultivating Dodona and responding on the most generous scale to the oracle's requests the Athenians were hoping to win goodwill for themselves in that direction.

Athens was not long to be free to act according to her own policy. In 322 B.C. as a consequence of the Lamian war Antipater, the Macedonian governor, sent a garrison to occupy Munychia, the steep hill behind the Piraeus. Plutarch records that 'only a few years previously the priestesses of Dodona had issued an oracle to the city that they should guard the high-places of Artemis so that others might not take them'.³⁰ The allusion clearly pointed to Munychia which was the site of a famous temple of the goddess. If authentic it indicates yet another enquiry made by the Athenians at Dodona in this period. But the brief reference in Plutarch cannot be regarded as very sound evidence. At best the response had probably been rather improved on in the telling to make it fit the event which was seen as its fulfilment. Perhaps the original version had merely contained some more general advice to care for the cult of Artemis of Munychia.

We have followed down the relations of Athens and Dodona to the latest instance recorded in our literary evidence, but there were earlier traditions of the consultation of Zeus by the royal house of the Molossi. As we have seen, Alexander, the young king, had died in 330 B.C. when on an expedition in southern Italy. His death in battle was associated with prophecies of a conventional pattern. The story which appears first in Strabo and Livy was that he had received an oracle from Dodona that he should beware of the Acheron and Pandosia.³¹ This appeared to point to the famous river in Epirus flowing into the Adriatic and to a town near it. But there was also a town of the same name near a river Acheron in Lucania and this was the scene of Alexander's death. The equivocation of the homonymic prophecy is a favourite motive in Greek legends and here no doubt it is an invention occasioned by the fact that Alexander was killed near a town and a river whose names resembled those of his native Epirus. Livy and later Justin work up the story until the wish to avoid the Thesprotian places is actually made a motive for Alexander's expedition to Italy. Thus they add to the legend another favourite theme, that the person who thinks he is escaping from a doom foretold is really bringing it on himself.

King Pyrrhus of Epirus was a great patron of Dodona. Its theatre and other improvements in the sanctuary were probably due to his patronage and he honoured the god with dedications. For instance, after his victory over Antigonus Gonatas and his army of Macedonians and Celtic mercenaries, he dedicated the Celtic spoils at the shrine of Athena Itonia in Thessaly and the Macedonian spoils at Dodona with the inscription: 'These once ravaged the Asian land with its abundance of gold and these too brought slavery on the Greeks, but now by the pillars of the temple of Zeus lie the spoils abandoned of boastful Macedon.'³² A few years earlier he had also joined the Tarentines in sending to Dodona the spoils of his victory over the Romans. The inscription on a bronze tablet was found there in Carapanos' excavations. It records the dedications simply in prose: 'King Pyrrhus and the Epirotes and the Tarentines from the Romans and their allies to Zeus Naios.'³³ In view of these material instances of devotion to Zeus it is not surprising that Pyrrhus has left his mark on literary tradition of the oracle. It was already established in the post-homeric Epic that Neoptolemus Pyrrhus after the Trojan war had retired to Epirus. But our later sources give a version which is obviously modified to suit King Pyrrhus. According to this when his heroic namesake, the son of Achilles, came to the temple of Zeus at Dodona to consult the oracle he encountered Lanassa, the grand-daughter of Heracles, and proceeded to carry her off as his bride and beget eight children by her.³⁴ By this legend King Pyrrhus was provided with a Heraclid ancestry to combine with his descent from Achilles, and the name of the ancestress, Lanassa, appears to be borrowed directly from the daughter of Agathocles who was for a time Pyrrhus' wife.

As for King Pyrrhus himself, however, tradition attributed his most famous enquiry not to Dodona but to Delphi. Ennius in his *Annales* described how the Pythian Apollo had given as a response to King Pyrrhus the famous equivocation:

Aio te, Aeacida, Romanos vincere posse.

Cicero, who is the first extant author to quote this hexameter line, already voiced complete disbelief in its authenticity.³⁵ His three reasons are that the Pythia did not speak Latin, to which of course it is possible to reply that the verse is simply a paraphrase from Greek. But Cicero anticipates this argument by asserting that

the response was unknown to Greek authors. His third argument that the Pythia at that period did not prophesy in verse is probably not completely sound. Oracles in verse were rare, but it would not be safe to assert that the use of verse was in itself a proof of forgery. Actually it is probable that Cicero was right in his main point. If he asserts that the words were not to be found in Greek sources, he is not likely to be mistaken, and this is the best argument for the proposition that Ennius invented the prophecy. Probably his model was the famous ambiguous oracle to King Croesus which foretold that by crossing the Halys he would destroy a great nation. Only one ancient source can be quoted to suggest that Ennius might have had a literary foundation for his legend. This is Dio Cassius who in a fragment paraphrases the oracular ambiguity in prose and attributes it to Dodona, instead of Delphi.³⁶ It might be argued that this represents the original version and that Ennius had transferred the legend, while enhancing it, to Delphi because the Pythia would be much more familiar to Roman readers. But Dio does not seem to use particularly early or reliable sources on Pyrrhus and it is much more probable that his variant is subsequent to Cicero's criticisms and represents an attempt to make the story more plausible.

On the other hand we have a very distant and indirect, but not necessarily unreliable, source which shows Pyrrhus consulting the oracle of Dodona on one of his campaigns. Among the dedications in the temple of Athena of Lindos on Rhodes the priestly chronicle records 'a bridle and armour which King Pyrrhus himself had used in the dangers of war, dedicated in accordance with the oracle from Dodona'.³⁷ Evidently in the course of one of his campaigns Zeus had instructed Pyrrhus to offer these pieces of his equipment to Athena of Lindos. The precise occasion is not recorded by the priests. So it need not have been during his war with the Romans, but may have been previously or even subsequently. It is not likely to be a pure invention. Presumably the enquiry had asked to what gods and goddesses offering should be made for success, and the Dodonaean priestess had included the famous Rhodian sanctuary in her reply. It is impossible to establish whether this was a spontaneous act of the prophetess or whether, for instance, King Pyrrhus wished for a convenient excuse to make an effective diplomatic demonstration in Rhodes. Anyway it remains our only reliable evidence for a consultation

of Dodona by Pyrrhus. In spite of this hiatus in our sources, it is of course very likely that the king had consulted the oracle of Dodona before embarking on the expedition against the Romans, and that the prophetess foretold success without making use of such obvious ambiguities as later legends suggested.

The enquiry of King Pyrrhus is the last instance of a historic consultation of Dodona recorded in our literary authorities. This is not a true picture of the situation. For, as the leaden strips with questions scratched on them show, the oracle was certainly functioning down to the devastation of the sanctuary by the Aetolians in 219 B.C. and even probably to its destruction by the Romans in 167 B.C. The failure of literary evidence for this period is typical of the general weakness of our sources for most of this period. After the eclipse of the oracle at the time of the Roman conquests it still continued to appear in literary tradition and particularly came to be annexed to the various legends that grew up about the foundation of Rome and the settlement of Italy. To trace these we must go back to earlier Greek sources.

Hellanicus of Lesbos, as part of his many activities in reconstructing Greek prehistory, seems to have been the first to make an identification of the Pelasgi and the Etruscans.³⁸ He regarded the Pelasgi as primitive inhabitants of Thessaly—a view for which he could find support by interpreting Homer. They were, as he pictured it, driven west by the invading Greeks, and ultimately settled both at Spina in the north-western corner of the Adriatic and in central Italy where they became the Etruscans. In the process of these wanderings he probably brought them through Dodona, for which idea again he could find Homeric support. We have no surviving fragment to show whether Hellanicus made his wandering Pelasgi consult the oracle at Dodona (which he evidently pictured as managed by their kinsmen), but it would be very probable that he did and made the oracle approve of their migration to Italy in the typical manner of a later Greek colony founded after consultation of Delphi. The idea of Pelasgi guided to Italy by a response from Zeus is first extant in a later version preserved by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.³⁹ He quotes Lucius Mallius, a Roman writer, probably of the first century B.C., as describing how he had himself seen in the sanctuary of Zeus an inscription carved in ancient lettering which recorded the oracle given to the Pelasgians which he proceeds to quote in four hexa-

meter verses. The whole is probably a fabrication of Mallius or else of some near contemporary Greek source which he is using. It runs: 'Go on your way, aiming at the Saturnian land of the Sicels and Aborigines, to Cotyle where an island rides. When you have mingled with them send out a tithe to Phoebus and go on sending heads to the son of Cronus and to his father a man.'

The wording is very clumsy and conceals a series of vague ambiguities according to the worse traditions of Greek oracle-mongering. Its meaning is only made plain by its legendary fulfilments. 'Cotyle where an island rides' was identified as a town in Umbria with a sacred lake containing a floating island near it. The last two lines with their offerings to Apollo, Juppiter and Saturn are not explained by Dionysius. But evidently the 'tithe to Phoebus' alludes to some such practice as the consecrating of a tithe of the enemy's spoils to the god. The last line is interpreted by Macrobius, who quotes the text of the oracle from Varro as an explanation for the origin of the *Saturnalia*.⁴⁰ (His version contains a slight verbal difference, as it runs: 'heads to Hades and to the father a man'.) According to Macrobius after their victory over the native inhabitants of Italy the Pelasgi had consecrated a tithe of the spoils to Apollo and set up a shrine to Dis and an altar to Saturn. Then taking the oracle literally they had offered human heads to Dis and male victims to Saturn until Heracles taught them that by heads were meant *oscilla*—the swinging masks used in Roman ritual—and that the word for 'man' could also mean 'light'. (This last ambiguity is only possible in Greek, and would not work with Latin words.) It looks as though whoever composed the hexameter was trying to reproduce two different motives: the typical colonization-oracle which advises the enquirer to settle in a rather improbable, but identifiable, place, and the *aition* for two Roman cults in which, as often in such legends, the later religious practice was explained as a substitute for human sacrifice. In any case it cannot have been produced except in close contact with Roman thought and language. Such names as Saturnian and Aborigines were not of Greek origin. It is evidently a fiction created in the last century B.C. or not much earlier.

As an alternative to the consultation of Zeus of Dodona by the Pelasgi, legend could represent Aeneas as enquiring there on the course of his westward wanderings. Again Dionysius is our

earliest extant source, since Vergil omitted the episode, though he made his hero visit Epirus.⁴¹ According to Dionysius the Trojan wanderers found other Trojans, Helenus and his colleagues, settled there. They consulted the oracle about their colony and consecrated among other offerings bronze mixing bowls which still were extant recording the names of their donors in archaic lettering. The words of the oracular response are not recorded, but evidently it was foretold that they were to journey till they came to a place where they ate their tables: then they were to take a four-footed beast as their guide and where it tired, they were to build their city. The prophecy had its proper fulfilment when Aeneas and his companions reached Laurentum. There they proceed to eat the cakes which they have put beneath their food and so 'ate their tables'. Thereupon a pregnant sow, which was about to be sacrificed, escaped and led them to the site of Lavinium.

It is interesting to see how Vergil rehandled these elements.⁴² The original prophecy concerning eating tables is not made at Dodona, but first by the Harpy Celaeno at the Strophades and only mentioned reassuringly by Helenus when met at Buthrotum on the coast of Epirus. There it is given an Apolline setting. Helenus leads Aeneas to the shrine of Phoebus and speaks as inspired by him. He describes the sow as white and with thirty piglets, and does not give it as a guide, but a sign to show the site of the city by the place where it is found lying. The fulfilment of the omens also appears unconnected at different places in the Aeneid. The former occurs as soon as Aeneas lands at the Tiber mouth: the white sow with thirty piglets some days later and after a preliminary announcement by the Tiber himself addressing Aeneas. This rehandling of the legend is undoubtedly due to Vergil since Servius refers to Varro as attributing the omen of the eaten tables to a Dodonaean oracle.⁴³ Evidently, of course, these imaginary prophecies were likely to be assigned by different authors to different sources. Dionysius knew of an alternative version in which Aeneas had carried the warning of these omens with him from the Troad where he had learned of them from the Sibyl, and a later author ascribed it to Delphi.⁴⁴ Dodona had a certain claim as lying near Aeneas' possible route and being well known to the Romans, but even so had great difficulty in maintaining its traditional place against the superior reputation of Delphi.

It remains to turn from the historical and legendary responses of Zeus to those dealing specifically with religious cults. Some of these can be dated approximately, but more often they have no place in chronology and so are best dealt with by subjects. Already in previous discussions we have seen instances where Zeus had reminded the Athenians more than once of their obligations to his own cult and to that of his partner Dione. Also he commanded worship of Dionysus, Apollo the averter and Zeus Ktesios, and appeared in one instance to have enjoined or sanctioned an offering to Athena of Lindos. Dionysus is the only one of these deities who appears elsewhere in our literary and epigraphic evidence as connected with Dodona.

The best documented example of Dodona's activity in religion is the establishment of the cult of the Thracian goddess Bendis in Attica. It appears to have been introduced to the Piraeus in 429 B.C. Probably there was some connection at the time with Athenian interests in the Thraceward regions which had been further stimulated by the Peloponnesian war and the alliance with King Sitalces. The novelty and interest of the new cult is also illustrated in the opening scene of Plato's *Republic* which takes place on the inauguration of the festival. Our literary sources, however, give no indication that Zeus of Dodona was concerned in this event. For that we have to turn to an Attic inscription of the mid-third century B.C. recording a decree of the Attic guild of worshippers of Bendis.⁴⁵ This mentions in its preamble: 'since the people of Athens has given alone of all foreign nations to the Thracians the right to possess land and found a sanctuary in accordance with the oracle from Dodona and to send a procession from the hearth of the Prytaneion . . .'. The reference appears to be, not to a contemporary sanction of the cult, but to its original founding in the late fifth century and as we have already seen this would not be an unplausible context. We have epigraphic evidence for a dedication from Athens made at Dodona to celebrate a victory in 429 B.C.⁴⁶ So it would be very likely that at this time when the Athenians were cultivating good relations with Dodona and probably had no access to Delphi, they took occasion to obtain Zeus' sanction for the introduction of a foreign cult. We need not suppose that the priestly authorities at Dodona had taken the initiative in the matter. It is sufficient to suppose that they gave the god's approval when asked.

The cult of Bendis is an interesting and well-authenticated instance of a function which is often attributed to oracles by our ancient traditions—the authorization of some peculiar cult. The instance of Bendis is historical: more often the examples are legendary. Very typical is the cult of Athena at Teuthis in Arcadia. Pausanias the traveller describes how he saw there in a temple of Athena a statue of the goddess shown as wounded with a purple bandage on her thigh.⁴⁷ The legend associated with it explained that its origin went back to the time of the Trojan war. The local contingent which joined the Greek side was led by Teuthis (of the same name as the locality) or as some accounts said, by Ornytus. He quarrelled with Agamemnon when the fleet was detained at Aulis and was preparing to lead back his troops when Athena appeared in the guise of Melas the son of Ops and attempted to dissuade him. In furious anger Teuthis struck the goddess on her thigh with his spear and led away his army. But on reaching home he had a vision of Athena wounded in the thigh which was followed by a wasting disease which attacked him and a famine which blighted his town alone of Arcadia. Subsequently an oracle from Dodona instructed the inhabitants how to appease Athena and the prescription included the making of a statue of the goddess showing her wounded.

It looks as though in this instance the peculiar local cult probably dated back to very primitive times, like others in Arcadia, and the legend was developed to justify the remarkable feature when it was embodied in a statue. Why Dodona should have been chosen as the legendary source of the oracle cannot be explained. Other peculiar cults in Arcadia are attributed to Delphic oracles. Without further evidence there is no hope of accounting for the matter.

Pausanias tells another aetiological legend in his description of the cults of Patrae.⁴⁸ These had been introduced from elsewhere at the time of the synoecism of the city: among them the temple of Dionysus was dedicated to him under the epithet Calydonian because the image had been transferred from the town of that name. Pausanias, therefore, tells the legend connected with the worship of Dionysus in its original site. There had been a priest of the god called Coresus who fell passionately in love with a maiden named Callirhoe. But the more intense his love became, the more the maiden loathed him, until, when all his appeals and gifts were spurned, he took refuge as a suppliant with the image of

the god. Dionysus took pity on his priest and struck the people of Calydon with an immediate madness like drunkenness. They appealed to the oracle at Dodona. 'For', as Pausanias explains, 'to those who inhabit this mainland, the Aetolians and their neighbours the Acarnanians and the Epirotes, the doves and the sooth-sayings from the oak appear particularly to partake of the truth.' On this occasion the response from Dodona was that the curse was the consequence of Dionysus' wrath and there would be no relief until Coresus sacrificed to Dionysus either Callirhoe herself or the man who dared to die in her stead. The maiden tried unavailingly to find a substitute to die for herself. So after all the preliminaries prescribed by Dodona had been accomplished Callirhoe was led to the altar and Coresus stood ready to offer the victim. But at the last moment Coresus instead of striking Callirhoe stabbed himself to death, becoming by this act the man who dared to die for her. His noble deed completely changed the maiden's feelings towards him and she later committed suicide by stabbing herself over a spring in the neighbourhood which was henceforth called by her name.

It is not uncommon for local cults of Dionysus to be associated with legends of primitive human sacrifice, often explained by an oracular response. Here the story takes on a romantic form which is not likely to be older than the Hellenistic period. Pausanias' comment on the important significance of the sanctuary of Dodona to the peoples of north-west Greece sufficiently accounts for the choice of that centre as the source of the divine instructions. It is worth noting also that Dodona appears in various other examples as connected with the cult of Dionysus. We have already seen the oracle quoted by Demosthenes as supporting the cult at Athens. But more than a century earlier an Athenian historian Pherecydes had connected the nymphs of Dodona with the legend of Dionysus.⁴⁹ According to him the Hyades (the constellation whose name implies the Raingivers) were originally seven nymphs, children of Dodon. When the infant Dionysus needed to be protected from the jealous wrath of Hera, he was placed with them to act as his nurses. They in turn brought him to Thebes and entrusted him to Ino. In recompense for their services they were no doubt raised to the heavens.

This is not likely to be the earliest version of Dionysus' upbringing. The original legend represented him as carried to Nysa, an apparently mythical place which ancient authors localized at

the ends of the earth—in Ethiopia above Egypt, in Arabia, or in Libya.⁵⁰ From the time of Alexander India became the favourite location. Pherecydes appears to represent an early rationalizing attempt which would place Dionysus' nursery in an out-of-the-way corner of Greece itself. He appears to have justified it by deriving the name of the Hyades from Hyes as a cult title of Dionysus. It may have been merely intellectual speculation on his part. But if already by the fifth century Dodona had accepted the cult of Dionysus and was sponsoring it, his theory may have seemed to have a certain appropriateness. In support of the hypothesis of Dionysiac influence at Dodona as early as 500 B.C. may be quoted the magnificent bronze figurine of an ithyphallic satyr found by Carapanos.⁵¹ Though this might have been dedicated in the sanctuary as a typical product of East Greek style, it would have added significance if the cult of Dionysus was accepted at Dodona.

In later times a Hellenistic author Philistus produced a different legend connecting Dionysus, Dodona and a constellation.⁵² This time the god was no infant, but when fully grown went to consult the oracle about a madness which Hera raised against him. His road was blocked by floods, and he was helped to cross by some donkeys. These he rewarded and placed in the stars in the constellation of the Crab where they were known as the Asses. The story is tricked out with such features as a contest between Priapus and the donkey, and in this form is late, but may again preserve traditional associations of Dodona with Dionysus.

In Pherecydes' version the Dodonaean nymphs brought Dionysus to Thebes and this is only one of a number of legendary connections between Dodona and Boeotia. We have already discussed the connection of the Tripodophoria and the conservative tradition whereby in classical times the Bocotians alone received their responses at Dodona through male prophets.⁵³ There are, however, a couple of other instances mentioned by Pausanias and connected with religion.

When he describes the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Potniae, he mentions a piece of ritual which is exactly paralleled in the *Thesmophoria* at Eleusis.⁵⁴ Sucking pigs were thrown alive into sacred caves called Megara ('Halls'). Pausanias adds that there was a tradition that the pigs thrown in at Potniae reappeared next spring at Dodona. But though often a pious believer of local tales, on this occasion he adds the comment that others may perhaps be

persuaded by the story. It was not unusual for the Greeks to believe in extraordinary underground connections, particularly of rivers. Their limestone districts provided actual examples. But here it is most likely that the idea of the underground link between Boeotia and Dodona derives from some association in cult. Evidence for a ritual like the *Thesmophoria* at Dodona is otherwise lacking, but it may well have existed there.

The other place in Boeotia where Pausanias encountered the influence of Dodona was at the Kabeirion, west of Thebes.⁵⁵ In a somewhat vague account he describes how the Kabeiroi were originally men who inhabited the place and had received some special trust from Demeter, but what it was pious caution prevents him from explaining. The original Kabeiroi were driven away by the Epigoni, and the cult of Demeter was revived by Pelarge the daughter of Potneus and transferred by her to a different site. When Telondes and those that remained of the clan of the Kabeiroi returned they settled again on their original site, but the worship instituted by Pelarge, and particularly her practice of offering pregnant victims, was supported by a Dodonaean oracle. In this somewhat confused picture of rival cults and alternative sites it appears clear that one set of mysteries, which did not claim to be the original, justified its existence and its practices by the authority of Zeus as against a claim to primeval tradition. Also it is interesting that there appears to be a connection between this instance and our other Boeotian example. For Pelarge, a presumably legendary figure, who restored the cult, is described as the daughter of Potneus. He is evidently the eponymous hero of Potniae, the site of the other worship of Demeter connected with Dodona. So we seem to see the oracle fostering the spread of a cult of Demeter from one site in Boeotia, with which it had friendly relations, to another.

The only cult whose propagation is explicitly attributed to Dodona in antiquity is that of the river Acheloos. This idea goes back to Ephorus, who, as was typical of his time, did not put it forward as a fact of religious history, but to explain a linguistic usage.⁵⁶ As he stated it, to other rivers, indeed, their neighbouring peoples offer sacrifice, but the Acheloos is the only one which it has happened that all men honour. For they do not name the other rivers with common names in place of their individual names, but they transfer the individual name of the Acheloos to common

use. For water generally which is a common name we call Achelion from the individual name of that river—‘Of this puzzle we have no explanation to offer except the oracular responses from Dodona. For in practically all of them the god is accustomed to command to sacrifice to Acheloos. With the result that many, thinking that it was not the river flowing through Acarnania, but water in general, that was called Acheloos by the oracle, imitate the terms used by the god. An indication that we are accustomed to speak in this way on analogy with the divine is the fact that we mostly address water as Acheloos in oaths and in prayers and in sacrifices all of which are concerned with the gods.’

Ephorus’ explanation of the use of the name Acheloos for rivers in general and for water is expressed a little simply. However, he makes one interesting statement for which we would have no other evidence—that the oracle of Dodona in practically all its responses enjoined sacrifice to Acheloos. There must be some element of exaggeration in this generalization, and it gains no support from our known instances of responses. But they are few and, even if authentic, only extant usually in literary paraphrases which may have omitted such details. Also though Ephorus does not make this clear in his statement, he can only be thinking of the form of response which answered the question: ‘To what god or goddess must I sacrifice so as to obtain such a result?’ This was a regular pattern of enquiry, but figures little in our literary evidence. It would be plausible enough that the priestess of Dodona made a practice of adding to a list of suitable deities the name of the Acheloos.

Greece is a country poorly provided with rivers. Many of the streams to which classical scholars give that name dry up in the summer. The Acheloos with a course of 150 miles is the longest river of Greece and the one which throughout the year carries the largest volume of water. Hence it is not surprising that particularly in primitive times it was regarded with special veneration. The most remarkable evidence for this is the passage in the *Iliad* where Achilles boasts about his defeat of Asteropaeus who claimed to be the grandson of the river Axius. Achilles asserts that his own descent from Zeus makes him as superior to the grandson of a river as Zeus is greater than any river-god. ‘But it is not possible to fight with Zeus the son of Cronos, whom not even the kingly Acheloos can match (nor the great might of deep flowing Ocean) from whom

indeed all rivers and every sea and all springs and deep wells flow. But even he fears the mighty thunderbolt of Zeus.⁵⁷ As our manuscripts mostly represent it, Acheloos is grouped with Ocean as the greatest river. But already as early as the edition of Zenodotus it was usual to omit the line which mentioned Ocean by name. This left Acheloos alone in the context and made it the source of all the waters of the earth. However exaggerated this view may seem, it appears to have been the text known also to Pausanias, and makes better sense in the context.

It is interesting to contrast Homer with Hesiod. The latter in the *Theogony* records how Tethys bore to Ocean the eddying rivers of which he proceeds to list twenty-five.⁵⁸ The 'silver-eddying' Acheloos occurs in the middle of this catalogue which includes the Nile and the Danube as well as rivers of Asia Minor, Thrace and Greece. It is not surprising that in such company, the Acheloos has no outstanding position. The difference between its treatment in Homer and in Hesiod is presumably to be explained by the different dates of their original matter. Hesiod evidently reproduces a picture of geography derived from the early archaic period when trade and colonization were beginning to widen Greek horizons. Homer derives his tradition from an age when the Acheloos was the largest river known to the Greeks. It is interesting and appropriate that Homer has put into the mouth of Achilles both the unique prayer to Zeus of Dodona and the exaggerated description of the Acheloos. Both ideas derive from a bronze age period when Dodona was linked with Thessaly and the realm of Achilles.

Acusilaus, one of the earliest of the prose historians, tried to harmonize the two accounts of the epic poets. He made the Acheloos the son of Ocean and Tethys, but described him as 'the eldest of the rivers and the one who is most honoured'.⁵⁹ For the cult of the river the Homeric scholia refer to Athens, Didyma, Rhodes and Sicily, as well as a contest in his honour in Acarnania. This last example seems to be supported by the representation of the local river on Acarnanian coinage. As to Athens there is no sign of a state cult, but in the *Phaedrus* when Socrates is praising the charm of the rustic scene of the dialogue, he identifies the spot as consecrated to Acheloos and the nymphs.⁶⁰ Similarly Pausanias records that at the Amphiareum the fifth share from the altar went 'to the Nymphs and Pan and the rivers Acheloos and

Cephisus'. Again at Megara in the late seventh century when the tyrant Theagenes diverted a stream he erected an altar to Acheloos. Even on the island of Myconus about 200 B.C. when the cults were reorganized a sacrifice of a full grown victim and ten lambs was assigned to Acheloos on his annual festival in midsummer.

It is, of course, impossible to show without other evidence whether any of these cults were due directly to oracular instructions from Dodona. Some of them may have been. In others it may have been due to imitation without direct contact with the oracle. In other instances it may be the influence of Homer. But even Homer as we have suggested may have himself been influenced by the ideas of the Selloi, if we believe, as we are entitled to do, that the veneration of the Acheloos was a primitive tradition at Dodona.

Only one hero is associated with the same oracle and that appropriately enough is Achilles. He had heroic worship in many parts of the Black Sea region, sporadically in Asia Minor, in Elis and at Croton in Italy, but in Epirus, as Plutarch records, was worshipped as a god, and was addressed by a local name, Aspetus.⁶¹ It is clear that this is not merely some dialect variant on the hero's name, but a quite independent word, and the obvious conclusion is that Aspetus was originally a local, possibly non-hellenic, deity of Epirus whom for some reason it was later found convenient to identify with the Homeric hero. Perhaps Aspetus was a war god, and the oracle of Dodona by this identification may have repaid the compliment which Homer paid to it by putting into the mouth of Achilles the invocation of Zeus Dodonaeus. However, the literary source which connects the oracle with Achilles is very late and deals with his cult in another place. Philostratus the elder in his *Heroicus*, written early in the third century A.D. states:⁶² 'The Thessalian heroic offerings, which are sent regularly from Thessaly to Achilles, were prescribed to the Thessalians by a response from Dodona. For the oracle commanded the Thessalians to sail to Troy and make offerings annually to Achilles partly to sacrifice to him as a god and partly as though in the realm of the dead. Originally then it was done as follows: A ship from Thessaly hoisted black sails and set out for Troy carrying twice seven sacred ambassadors. Also they brought two bulls, a black and a white tamed to eat from the hand both of them, and fuel from Mount Pelion (so that they need not depend on the foreign city in any matter) and fire from Thessaly and drink-offerings and water,

drawn from the river Spercheius, from where also the Thessalians first learnt the custom of using garlands of amaranth for funerals, so that, even if the winds delayed the ship, they would not bring wreaths that were decayed or faded. The ship, then, had to put in to harbour at night, and before they touched land they sang a hymn from the ship addressed to Thetis and composed as follows (and Philostratus quotes the verses). After the hymn they advanced to the funeral mound of Achilles and the noise of the shield could be heard rattling as in war and they shouted the war-cry with rhythmic charges, calling on Achilles. Having garlanded the summit of the mount and dug pits in it they sacrificed the black bull to him as to a dead man. They also used to invite Patroclus to the funeral banquet as though they were doing this to please Achilles. When they had cut up the victim and made the offerings they used to go down to the ship, and made a sacrifice on the beach of the second bull once more to Achilles with the ritual of sacrificial meal and entrails in this instance. For they made this sacrifice to him as to a god, and about dawn they used to sail away bringing the sacrificed victim with them so as not to hold the feast on enemy soil. These things, stranger, so solemn and old-fashioned they say were abolished by tyrants who are described as ruling the Thessalians after the family of Aeacus, and they say the ritual was neglected by Thessaly. For some of the cities used to send ambassadors, but others ignored it, and others still said they would send next year, always postponing the business. But when the land was hard pressed by famine and the oracle bade "honour Achilles, as the sacred duty required", they abandoned the sacrifice to Achilles as a god since that was the interpretation which they put on the sacred duty, but made offerings to him as a dead man and sacrificed in the usual way until the invasion of Xerxes reached Greece. Then the Thessalians medized and abandoned again their traditional rites to Achilles, after the ship sailed to Salamis from Aegina bringing the household of the Aeacidae as allies on the Greek side.'

It is very hard to know how to assess this picturesque description. No doubt Philostratus produced it as a piece of free writing with a primitive religious flavour. The problem is what amount of genuine evidence, if any, lay behind his colourful narrative. Of course the original instructions from Dodona are not likely to have dated, as Philostratus implies, from the time of the Aeacidae and

the generation immediately following Achilles' death. But there is something curiously plausible, as we have seen, in the idea that Dodona should have originally prescribed ritual which included the worship of Achilles as a god. This was simply extending the cult of Aspetus. It is also quaintly appropriate if later when reviving the custom the Thessalians took advantage of a vague phrase in the second response to justify dropping the peculiarity of the divine in contrast to the heroic cult. The final touch that the ritual ceased because the family of Achilles had been invoked successfully in battle against the Thessalians makes ingenious use of a famous passage in Herodotus,⁶³ but it is perhaps on that account too likely to be the invention of a later litterateur. The main difficulty in accepting the general lines of Philostratus' account is the natural doubt whether any satisfactory evidence had survived to his day about ritual which was alleged to have ceased as early as 480 B.C.

We have left to the end what are the most famous utterances on religion ascribed to the oracle of Dodona, and the only ones with a literary form. Pausanias when describing the Sibyl's rock at Delphi inserts a long digression on all the local Sibyls and ends with two examples of prophetesses who as he says, 'were not called Sibyls by men', but were evidently in his view to be put in the same class because 'they too prophesied from God'.⁶⁴ The first was 'Phaennis, the daughter of a man who was king among the Chaones'. Pausanias dates her by saying that she was born 'when Antiochus came to the throne immediately after the capture of Demetrius' (Poliorcetes). These two events are to be correctly dated in 285 and 281/0 B.C. The only prophecy of Phaennis quoted by Pausanias is a forecast of the defeat of the Galatians by Attalus in 230 B.C. It has all the features of a *post eventum* prophecy. The battle took place in 230 B.C. so it would have been quite possible for an Epirote princess to have been born about 285 B.C. and have issued her forecast before or more likely shortly after Attalus' campaign.⁶⁵

Together with Phaennis Pausanias groups 'the Doves among the Dodonaeans'. They 'were said to have been born still earlier than Phemonoe' (the traditional first Pythia at Delphi), 'and they were the first of women to have sung the following verses:

Zeus was, Zeus is, Zeus shall be. O mighty Zeus!
Earth sends up fruits; therefore call ye Earth mother.'

Pausanias offers no further explanation of these utterances and they do not recur elsewhere in Greek literature. This is not in itself surprising, for Pausanias was a specialist in the subject of prophecy, and prided himself on his extensive acquaintance with unfamiliar examples.

First, one may note that there is no suggestion that these were responses addressed to enquirers. Pausanias does not imply anything of the sort and in fact to describe their authors as Sibyls suggested the contrary. Owing to Vergil's description of Aeneas' consultation of the Sibyl at Cumae, modern readers are inclined to think of the Sibyl in terms of the regular female seer presiding over a place of consultation. But this is not the usual Greek conception. To them the Sibyls were divinely inspired prophetesses who spoke discursive utterances, usually forecasts, in spontaneous ecstasy. These two lines of hexameter verse can be regarded in this way. They are pious ejaculations, not answers to enquirers.

Also the first sentence in particular is remarkable both in its metre and its content. The monosyllabic ending preceded by a short syllable lengthened by position has a very unusual and dramatic metrical effect. Curiously enough these last three words occur again in a verse response attributed to the Pythia, which is evidently a post-homeric composition probably written not earlier than 500 B.C., but possibly much later.⁶⁶ It would be unsafe on *a priori* grounds to decide which context was the earlier. Undoubtedly the Dodonaean verse makes a much more dignified and impressive use of the phrase which in the Delphic oracle suggests the mock heroic.

The content of the verse is still more remarkable. Zeus was never regarded in Homer or in any pre-Hellenistic writer as independent of time. Instead he is Zeus Cronides, the son of Cronos, with a historic, if distant, date of birth and, if the Cretans were to be believed, a date of death also. It would not have been impossible for Homer to have grouped all time, past, present and future, together in this kind of phrase. His description of Calchas' prophetic gifts, though more clumsily worded is not dissimilar.⁶⁷ But the conception of a supreme god whose existence was commensurate with time was not familiar to the classical Greek and is never expressed in this way in his literature. Its natural home is in the theology of the near East. The most famous expression is in the *Revelation* of St. John where God describes himself to the prophet

as 'which is and which was and which is to come'.⁶⁸ The phrase has close analogies elsewhere in Jewish and non-Jewish literature as applied to Jehovah or Ahuramazda, and it is from some such source that the Dodonaean priesthood derived their address to Zeus. Even in the days of Herodotus they had not been unaware of foreign cults and had accepted the identification of Zeus as supreme with other supreme deities of non-Hellenic peoples. So it is reasonable to suppose that in the time of Pyrrhus when there must have been an abundance of contacts between the Hellenistic kingdoms some Jewish or Mazdian influence suggested the adoption of this formula to express the pre-eminence of Zeus. It was at the same period that the Stoics were preaching in their own words a similarly exalted view of Zeus as world ruler and they too had been influenced to some extent by Semitic ideas.

The verse about Mother Earth is expressed in less ecstatic and more reasoned terms. Also its content is not unlike numbers of passages in Greek literature of all dates. An interesting minor contrast is the way in which Earth is not, as sometimes in Greek mythology, the enemy of Zeus. Their relationship is left vague, but friendly. We have seen examples of the oracle of Dodona associated with the cult of Demeter in Boeotia.⁶⁹ So it may be right to see in Mater Gaia another name for Demeter. Alternatively it might be a way of describing Dione, Zeus' female associate at Dodona. But unfortunately the single verse gives too little indication. At least it is worth remarking that if the two hexameters belong together in date the second of them should not be cited as evidence for a primitive cult of an Earth goddess at Dodona.⁷⁰ There is no indication elsewhere in our evidence to suggest that Zeus had any female predecessor there as apparently at Olympia or as Apollo had at Delphi.

It is best, therefore, to regard these two verses as a late product of Dodonaean theology. It is quite in accordance with this view that the words are put into the mouth of priestesses, not Selloi. Also to apply the terms Doves or Pelciades to them (for Pausanias used both forms) is typical of a period when the priestesses were described in this way as a rationalization of the old association of birds with the oracle. To claim that they were born before Phemonoe was only another example of the constant struggle of Dodona to assert itself against Delphi. In this rivalry the Epirotes found their strongest line was always their claim to greater antiquity.

So even if these verses cannot be taken as expressions of primitive piety, it is impressive to find that Dodona's latest utterance on religion was so moving and dignified.

NOTES

- ¹ Cic. *de Div.*, I, I, 3.
- ² Cf. *infra*, p. 179.
- ³ Wade-Gery, *CAH*, 2, 534.
- ⁴ Sch. Pi. *N.* 7, 155.
- ⁵ Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, p. 58, no. 25.
- ⁶ Duris, *F.Gr. Hist.* 76 f. 84 (Plu. *Prov. Alex.* I, 48).
- ⁷ Paus. 7, 25, 1. Cf. Parke, *Hermathena*, LV (1940), 56 ff.
- ⁸ Hdt. 5, 90, 2.
- ⁹ Hdt. I, 46.
- ¹⁰ Cf. *infra*, p. 201, and for this view, cf. R. Crahay, *La littérature oraculaire chez Hérodote*, 195.
- ¹¹ Hdt. 9, 93, 4 and cf. Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 358, II, no. 108 and R. Crahay, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
- ¹² Plu. *Them.* 28, 5.
- ¹³ Th. I, 136.
- ¹⁴ Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 198 and II, no. 166, and cf. *infra*, p. 216.
- ¹⁵ *SIG.* no. 73.
- ¹⁶ Dio Chr. 17, 17 (to attach); Paus. 8, 11, 12 (to settle). Cf. Plu. *Nic.* 13.
- ¹⁷ Ephorus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 70 f. 206 (Plu. *Lys.* 25); D.S. 14, 13, 4; Nepos, *Lys.* (VI), 3, 1. Plutarch gives the name as Pherecles, Diodorus as Pherecrates.
- ¹⁸ [Plu.] 2, 191 b gives a version of Agesipolis' consultation of Olympia and Delphi in which the motive is transferred to Agesilaus before his expedition to Asia Minor (395 B.C.) and Dodona is substituted for Olympia. This is no doubt apocryphal. For the authentic version, cf. *infra*, p. 187.
- ¹⁹ Cf. *supra*, p. 83. Callisthenes, *F.Gr. Hist.* 124 f. 22, a and b (Cic. *de Div.* I, 34, 76 and 2, 32, 69). Also cf. Cic. *de Div.* I, 43, 95 for a general observation on the Spartan practice of consulting Delphi, Ammon or Dodona.
- ²⁰ D.S. 15, 72, 3, probably using Ephorus as his source; Zen. I, 53; Apostol. I, 29; Arsenius, I, 45. For the episode without an oracle, Plu. *Ages.* 33.
- ²¹ X. *H.* 7, I, 32.
- ²² X. *Vect.* 6, 2.
- ²³ D. 21, 51. Cf. *supra*, p. 84.
- ²⁴ D. 19, 29.
- ²⁵ Din. I, 78 and 98.
- ²⁶ D. 18, 253. Cf. D. *Ep.* I, 16 and 4, 2.
- ²⁷ Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 244.
- ²⁸ Hyp. *Eux.* 24.
- ²⁹ Cf. *supra*, p. 118.
- ³⁰ Plu. *Phoc.* 28.
- ³¹ Str. 6, I, 5; Livy, 8, 24, 1; Justin, 12, 2, 3 and 14. Strabo and Stephanus

of Byzantium (s.v. Πανδοσία) also quote another oracle (unspecified) in the form of a hexameter line with the same ambiguity.

³² Paus. 1, 13, 2.

³³ *SIG*, 392.

³⁴ Justin, 17, 3, 4. Cf. Cross, *Epirus*, 102.

³⁵ Cic. *de Div.* 2, 56, 116. For other references, see Ennius, *Annales*, 6, 179 (ed. J. Vahlen). For discussion, Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 247 and II, no. 441. P. Lévêque, *Pyrrhus*, 273, seems misguided in his efforts to establish this as a genuine Delphic response.

³⁶ D.C. 9. fr. 40, 6.

³⁷ Lindian Chronicle (Blinkenberg), c. 114 (*F.Gr. Hist.* 532 f. 1, 4c).

³⁸ *F.Gr. Hist.* 4 f. 4 with Jacoby's commentary, and D.H. 1, 18, 2.

³⁹ D.H. 1, 19, 3. On Lucius Mallius or Manlius, cf. P.W. XV, 1, col. 159, no. 28 and also Manilius, P.W. col. 1115).

⁴⁰ Macrobius, *Sat.* 1, 7, 28. For an unspecified oracle to Meleos the Pelasgian, when enquiring about a settlement, cf. Zen. 5, 74 (quoting as sources Mnaseas and Dionysius the Chalcidian). Also see D.H. 1, 23, 4 (Myrsilos of Methymna, *F.Gr. Hist.* 477 f. 8) on an unspecified consultation of an oracle about famine with advice to sacrifice a tithe to Zeus, Apollo and the Kabeiroi. I hesitate to connect either of these with Dodona.

⁴¹ D.H. 1, 51 and 55, 4; Verg. *Aen.* 3, 291 ff.

⁴² Verg. *Aen.* 3, 255 (Celaeno); 3, 359 (the consultation of Helenus); 7, 116 (eating the tables); 8, 81 (the white sow).

⁴³ Servius in Verg. *Aen.* 3, 256.

⁴⁴ D.H. 1, 55, 4. Domitius apud incerti auctoris *Originem Gentis Romanae* 12, 3 (Parke and Wormell, *D.O.* II, 593).

⁴⁵ Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae*, II, 1, no. 42.

⁴⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 136.

⁴⁷ Paus. 8, 28, 4. Ornytus was the name used by Polemo (*F.H.G.* fr. 24; Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2, 36). The scholia to Pausanias challenge his statement that he saw the statue, on the rather inadequate ground that Callimachus (fr. 667, Pfeiffer) had referred to the local cult as already ceased.

⁴⁸ Paus. 7, 21.

⁴⁹ *F.Gr. Hist.* 3 f. 90 (Sch. A.D. Hom. *Il.* 18, 486; Hygin, *Astr.* 2, 21; Sch. Arat, p. 212 M). Also Hygin. *Fab.* 182.

⁵⁰ For Nysa, cf. *h. Hom. h. Bacch.* 1, 8 (the earliest reference), 'far from Phoenicia, near the streams of Aegyptus'; Hdt. 2, 146, 'in Ethiopia above Egypt'; D.S. 3, 59, 2 (in Arabia) and 3, 66, 4 (in Libya).

⁵¹ Carapanos, p. 31, no. 1. Cf. *infra*, Appendix II, p. 275, no. 3.

⁵² Philiscus ap. Sch. German. *Arat.* p. 70, 15. For Philiscus, cf. P.W. s.n. no. 4 and 5 (A. Körte).

⁵³ Cf. *supra*, p. 74.

⁵⁴ Paus. 9, 8, 1. For the ritual, cf. Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I², 463.

⁵⁵ Paus. 9, 25. On Pelarge, cf. P.W. s.v. (J. Krischan).

⁵⁶ Ephorus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 70 f. 20 (Macrob. *Sat.* 5, 18, 6, Sch. Hom. *Il.* 21, 195 and Servius in Verg. *Georg.* 1, 8). Also Sch. T. Hom. *Il.* 24, 616.

⁵⁷ Hom. *Il.* 21, 193. Cf. Paus. 8, 38, 10.

⁵⁸ Hes. *Th.* 337.

⁵⁹ Acusilaus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 2 f. 1 (Macrob. *Sat.* 5, 18, 9).

⁶⁰ Pl. *Phdr.* 230 b. Paus. 1, 34, 3 (Oropus), 41, 2 (Megara). *SIG*, 1024 (Myconos) *BCH.* 87 (1963), 607 (Erchia in Attica).

⁶¹ Plu. *Pyrrh.* 1. Cf. Hsch.s.v. Ἀσπετος (citing Aristotle's *Opuntian Constitution*).

⁶² Philostr. *Her.* 20, 25 (probably written to celebrate Caracalla's visit to Ilion in A.D. 2).

⁶³ Hdt. 8, 83, 2.

⁶⁴ Paus. 10, 12, 10.

⁶⁵ For Phaennis again, cf. Paus. 10, 15, 2. For late echoes cf. Tzetz, *Ch.* 7, 549 (where Phaenno, the Epirote, is cited with Sibylla as prophesying a Parthian victory over the Romans) and Zosim. 2, 56.

⁶⁶ Parke and Wormell, *D.O.* I, 314 and II, no. 406.

⁶⁷ Hom. *Il.* 1, 70.

⁶⁸ *Revelation*, 1, 8. The nearest equivalent in a pagan context is probably *SIG*, 1125—a monument erected at Eleusis by Quintus Pompeius and his brothers, probably in the Augustan period. It is in honour of Αἰών . . . ὁποῖος ἔστι καὶ ἦν καὶ ἔσται. But Aion is the spirit of time and is of oriental origin as a cult. Cf. Nilsson, *Geschichte*, II, 478 ff.

⁶⁹ Cf. *supra*, p. 152.

⁷⁰ For this argument cf. e.g. G. Rachet, *Le Sanctuaire de Dodone, origine et moyens de divination* (*Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*) IV, 1 (1962), 88.

CHAPTER VIII

OLYMPIA

We have considered in some detail the evidence, literary and archaeological, for the most important of the oracles of Zeus, Dodona. As a sanctuary where this god could be consulted it was the most used in the ancient world. But though this function was of high significance it did not make Dodona the chief centre of the cult of Zeus. This position could without doubt be claimed by Olympia. In the classical period its leading role was primarily due to its great four-yearly festival—the Olympic games. But actually it had an ancient tradition of oracular enquiry, though already from the end of the archaic period this had been largely engulfed in the athletic activities of the place.

In discussing the rule that the Selloi slept on the ground we have already noticed the curious late echo of this practice in Antioch and the fact that the official who was under this restriction had the same title, *Alytarch*, as an official at Olympia. It is possible, though beyond proof, that this points to a link between Dodona, Olympia and Antioch. Similarly if we explore the antecedents of the prophetic families at Olympia, we shall find in their primitive traditions a few points of contact with the Selloi.

There is no evidence that Zeus at Olympia ever gave his responses from an oak tree. In classical times the method was to take omens from sacrifices. But there is some evidence that the ancestors of his prophets interpreted the voices of birds. Also in one respect the sanctuary of Olympia was curiously like Dodona in early periods. Until nearly the middle of the fifth century, it contained no temple of Zeus. The god was worshipped at a peculiar altar in the open air, and the only temple was dedicated, not to him, but to Hera. So while the history of Olympia as an oracle-centre is worth study for its own sake, it also occasionally suggests some affinities with Dodona, particularly in primitive origin.

If we look back into the furthest recesses of Greek mythology,

the earliest individual who emerges as a prophet is Melampus. Already in the *Odyssey* he is once mentioned by name and in another place is referred to indirectly as a traditional figure whom Homer's hearers would recognize even without his name.¹ The Hesiodic corpus contained one poem, now lost—the *Melampodia*—which derived its title from him, and, judging from the fragments, its contents included not only his doings but also those of other later diviners who were his descendants or their rivals. Melampus, besides, figured in the *Great Eoiai*.² As early as the mid-fifth century if not earlier he had been provided by legend with a father, Amythaon, the eponym of a district in Elis; and thus was linked with the heroic stem of the Aeolids and a locality in the western Peloponnese.³ But it may well be doubted whether originally he had any precise antecedents or local connections. Where he first appears by name in the fifteenth book of the *Odyssey* he is the farthest ancestor of a line of prophets, and is given no earlier genealogy.

First his name itself is worth comment. It is almost unique in Greek mythology and was not in normal use in historic times.⁴ Its meaning and derivation are obvious: 'Black foot'. The oddity of the notion may explain why it was not popular as a personal name. Why it should have been applied to the prophet was not accounted for in primitive legend. A fragment of Dieuchidas, the fourth-century Megarian historian is the earliest occurrence of an explanation: his mother, Dorippe, after she had borne him, exposed him in a tree-shaded spot, and it happened that his feet were blackened by the sun since they lay outside the shade.⁵ The story looks like a late and rationalistic attempt to make sense of a peculiar epithet. That Dieuchidas' explanation was not primitive or authentic is further confirmed by the facts that his name for Melampus' mother differs from all other accounts and that the story that he had been exposed as an infant does not occur elsewhere.

If instead the name is taken literally, it is reasonable to suppose that it may be connected with the strange practice of the primitive Selloi. According to Homer they did not wash their feet. In the context it seems to imply, we have seen, a ritual practice. But the meaning and purpose of it had been forgotten long before the commentaries on Homer began to be composed. Similarly we find a primitive prophet—Black foot—whose name is not explained except in one late legend. It is plausible to conjecture that there is

some connection and that the name was given because the primitive prophet observed the same ritual taboo with obvious physical results.⁶ Also if we follow up this indication by examining more closely the earliest legends connected with Melampus we shall find that they are not inconsistent with a connection between him and the cult-practices of Dodona, but even show some points of contact.

First of all it is worth noting that some of the legends clustering round Melampus are of an extremely primitive kind and suggest an origin in unsophisticated folklore. For instance, the account in Apollodorus of how he got his gift of prophecy told that his home was in the country (apparently near Pylos) and that before his house stood an oak in which there was a lair of snakes.⁷ His servants killed the snakes, but Melampus 'gathered wood and cremated the reptiles and reared their young. When they were fully grown, they came beside him at the back of his shoulders as he slept, and purged his ears with their tongues. He started up in a great fright, but thereafter understood the voices of the birds flying overhead, and from what he learned from them he foretold to men what should come to pass'. The story appears properly to end there, but, as though as an afterthought, Apollodorus adds: 'He acquired besides the art of prophecy by means of sacrifices, and having fallen in with Apollo at the Alpheus he was ever after an excellent sooth-sayer.'

If we look at this account it is evident that originally Apollo had no connection with it. Melampus does not receive his gift of divination from a god, but as a reward for a good service to two snakes, and the method of prophecy conferred on him is not to recognize divine purposes by inspiration, but by understanding the language of birds. The motive of serpents licking the ears to convey the power of divination reappears in one legend about Helenus and Cassandra:⁸ as children they had been left overnight in a temple of Apollo and in the morning serpents were found licking their ears. But this is not the usual legend about Cassandra who is elsewhere represented as receiving prophecy as a personal gift of Apollo. Obviously a folk-tale motive has been introduced, but has been made to fit with the notion of Helenus and Cassandra as inspired by Apollo by setting the scene in the god's temple.

An alternative version of the same legend about Melampus is found in the scholia to Apollonius Rhodius citing the *Great Eoiai*

of Hesiod.⁹ In this version Melampus is 'away from home lodging with [king] Polyphontes. When an ox had been sacrificed a snake crept to the sacrifice and the servants of the king killed it'. Once more Melampus buries the snake and rears its young who convey the gift of prophecy in the same way. Also once more Apollo's name is introduced quite irrelevantly, since the narrative begins by describing Melampus as the dearest to Apollo. If this version is correctly reproduced from Hesiod it is interesting to note that the intrusion of Apollo into the descriptions of Melampus had established itself so early. In one way this version is more awkward to explain than that of Apollodorus. Polyphontes is not accounted for, but is represented as a king. The only one of that name otherwise known in Greek mythology was a ruler of Messenia, and that was the kingdom in which Melampus was usually supposed to reside. But also Polyphontes was a Heraclid, in the generation of the Dorian invasion, and therefore long after the date to which Melampus would properly belong by the usual genealogy. The point remains unexplained, but suits with the circumstance that originally Melampus may have had no proper place in the framework of Greek legend. Hence he could be attached by date to any convenient period. We may note, too, that in neither version is he made king of a locality; he either lives in the country apparently as a private individual or he is staying with the king on a visit.

We shall see that the primitive legend about Melampus' chief performance in prophecy also contains the motive of understanding the language of birds. The story begins when Neleus, king of Pylos, refused to give his daughter, Pero, in marriage to any suitor, unless he brought to him as bride-price the cattle of Phylacus.¹⁰ Bias, the brother of Melampus, was one of these suitors and he sought the prophet's help, who agreed to aid him, but foretold his own fate; that he would be detected stealing the cattle and kept in bondage for a year before he succeeded. The venture turned out as prophesied. Melampus was caught while stealing the cattle and imprisoned for a year. At the end of this time he heard two worms in the roof beam of his prison talking to each other. The one asked how much of the beam had already been gnawed through, and the other answered that very little of it was left. So Melampus induced his warders to carry him from the cell whose roof immediately fell in. (Some versions embroider this with the further detail that the warders were a man who treated Melampus well and a woman

who vexed him. Melampus had persuaded them to carry him out by lying on the bed pretending to be ill. The woman who was carrying the foot of the bed was killed by the falling beam, while the man at the head of the bed escaped.) This demonstration of Melampus' prophetic powers brought home to Phylacus that he could make use of his prisoner to ascertain why his son, Iphiclus, suffered from impotence and how to cure him. Melampus promised to give the answer in return for the kine. His method of discovering the secret is interesting. He sacrificed two oxen and invited all the birds except the vulture to the feast. At first none of them could give the answer to Phylacus' question, but at last when the vulture was invited he explained the problem. At this embarrassing point our ancient authorities become rather confused. The naïve and primitive crudity of the story seems to have shocked them, but the general aim of the narrative can be established. The vulture explained that Phylacus had been gelding rams when he had given his son a terrible fright. Apparently he had unintentionally touched the boy's genital parts with the blood-stained knife which he had been using. This traumatic experience in a manner which modern psychology would heartily approve had inhibited the boy from begetting children. The vulture's instructions were that the knife must be found and the rust scraped from it and given to Iphiclus to drink for ten days. The knife after the original incident had been thrust by Phylacus into a tree which had grown round it and encompassed it with bark.

On the vulture's instructions Melampus was able to find the knife and follow out the prescribed cure, which was successful, and Iphiclus begat a son, Podarces. Accordingly Melampus was given the cattle which he had sought to steal and brought them to Pylos as a bride-price for Pero, who was wedded to his brother, Bias.

This complicated legend evidently goes back to primitive sources of folk-tale. Homer twice refers to it in the *Odyssey* in a way that clearly assumes that his hearers know the story, which would appear also to have been told in the Hesiodic corpus in both the *Melampodia* and the *Great Eoiai*. Already in the *Odyssey* a curious inconsistency is found in the references to it. In Book Eleven the kine are referred to throughout as though belonging to Iphiclus. It is he who releases Melampus, and Phylacus is not mentioned, though the cattle are described as coming from Phylace. In Book Fifteen Melampus is recorded as imprisoned in the halls of Phylacus

and Iphiclus' name does not occur. Later ancient narratives reconciled this inconsistency in the way indicated above, by making Phylacus the father of Iphiclus. He had therefore been the person responsible for the traumatic episode, and was still alive when Melampus was captured. One may doubt, however, whether this reconciliation of the discrepancy is original and authentic. It looks rather as though the *Odyssey* derived its references in different passages from different versions: in one the owner of the cattle was Phylacus, the eponym of the place, in the other Iphiclus, a cousin of Tyro, Neleus' wife. In the former version it looks as though originally Phylacus (= 'keeper') was just a folk-lore title for a wealthy possessor of kine. In the latter an elaborate story can be built up explaining how Neleus through his wife had a claim on the cattle, and by demanding them as a bride-price he was only indirectly asserting his legal rights. This version looks like a sophisticated product of a period when it did not seem quite proper for an epic hero to demand stolen property as the price of his daughter's hand. But if we are right in our supposition, this second version existed already and was well known before the composition of *Odyssey*, Book Eleven. Also a fragment of the *Melampodia* mentioning Iphiclus and Phylacus in the same context together with cattle, seems to show that the reconciling version had already found its way into the Hesiodic corpus.¹¹

For our purpose all that this suggests is that the legend of Melampus and the kine was a very old folk-tale which had time to go through a complicated evolution before it appears in the Greek epic.

If we return again to the substance of the story a number of points are to be noted which all confirm Melampus' general connection with the Selloi and their primitive system of prophecy. His divination is by understanding the language of creatures not intelligible to ordinary man. For his own protection he can listen to the conversation of wood-worms. When he makes a formal rite of divination he summons the birds to a feast, and talks to them, particularly to the vulture. (It is a charming piece of folk-tale that the vulture, an unpleasantly voracious guest, is originally left uninvited, but proves in the end to be the only source of information. Frazer has well illustrated from the popular stories of many peoples the notion that the last creature to be asked holds the desired secret.¹²) At any rate it is by understanding the language of

birds that Melampus can prophesy, not by consulting the gods direct. It is interesting here to notice that when making a feast Melampus had, of course, to offer his cattle to some deity. The idea of a meat meal without a preliminary sacrifice was ridiculous to the pagan world. But the deity to whom he offered it was not Apollo, but Zeus. Though this point should not be overstressed as a proof that Melampus was a prophet of Zeus, it at least shows that his legendary associations lay in that direction rather than with Apollo.

Secondly, it is worth noting that in Apollodorus' account of Melampus the motive of an oak tree appears twice. The young snakes whom he reared lived in an oak tree before his house. Also the tree into which Phylacus stuck the blood-stained knife is described by Apollodorus as 'the sacred oak tree'. Here he differs from our ancient commentaries which, strangely enough, specify a wild pear tree, with no statement that it was sacred.¹³ Frazer has suggested that there lies some tale behind the mention of the sacred oak in Apollodorus, and probably this is true. Again there is an echo of Dodona, but of course it cannot be supposed that the tree was there. It is interesting, however, to note that the Phylace of this story, whether or not the name had originally a literal meaning, was always identified with a place in Thessaly, and therefore lay well within the ambit of Dodona's original sphere of influence.

The conclusion we would draw from this investigation of Melampus is that one of the elements in his mythological origin is a group of folk-tales in which the hero is a prophet of a type similar to and even modelled on the Selloi of Dodona, and belonging in date to the period of their activity. He became a traditional figure in Greek epic and so acquired heroic ancestry and even a nominal connection with Apollo in later times.

In classical times the prophet Melampus had acquired quite other elements combined with this folk-tale character. At Aegosthena in the Megarid his tomb was shown and he was worshipped in a well-established local cult.¹⁴ But Pausanias notes explicitly that 'they say he does not give oracles either by dreams or otherwise'. This seems a strange lapse on the part of a legendary soothsayer, and the most probable explanation is that the hero worshipped in Aegosthena had really no connection with the Melampus of epic legend, but had simply been the object of a local cult, perhaps anonymous, on whom the name had been bestowed in

classical times for the sake of an honourable identification. Besides this curious local practice, Melampus also appears frequently in post-homeric literature and in local legends in connection with the worship of Dionysus. When the daughters of Proitus, king of Argos, reject the worship of the new god they are driven mad and flee into the country. Melampus undertakes to cure them for a reward which ultimately consists in a third of the kingship of Argos for himself and a third for his brother Bias, while the original dynasty retains the remaining fraction. Homer knew of Melampus as fated to rule over many Argives, but that he knew the legend in this form is unlikely. Certainly he makes Melampus leave Messenia on account of a quarrel with Neleus, not because he was attracted to Argos by the offer of kingship. Actually there was an alternative version of the Argive legend in which the deity whom the daughters of Proitus offended was not Dionysus, but Hera, the great goddess of the Argolid.¹⁵ That this might have been the earlier form is probable. It was then replaced by a variant on the favourite motive of opposition to the invading cult of Dionysus with its appropriate punishment for the impious and an ultimate reconciliation.

The remarkable way in which Melampus not merely claims a share of the kingship of Argos for himself, but also obtains an equal share for his brother Bias, suits with the legendary picture of his affection for his brother and zeal for his benefit. It may also have had some basis as an aetiological myth explaining the existence of a primitive triple kingship in Argos.¹⁶ The effect was that Melampus already in Homer is the ancestor of a line of Argive kings which includes the famous prophets, Amphiaraus and Amphilochus. It may have been a wish to give them a prophetic ancestry which led to the connection with Melampus being invented. In each instance Amphiaraus and Amphilochus, while being characters in Greek saga, also were local divinities with oracle shrines of their own, at the Amphiareum in the territory of Oropus and in Cilicia. Also like Melampus Amphiaraus tends to be drawn into the circle of Apollo's influence and becomes regarded in later tradition as his prophet, though probably he was originally a completely independent seer in either of his aspects as epic hero or local divinity.¹⁷ In the case of Amphilochus there is even positive evidence for hostility between his cult and Apollo, mirrored in the myth that he was slain by the god.¹⁸

Homer in the *Odyssey* took advantage of the legendary genealogy of the Melampodidae, to link his picturesque character of the exiled prophet, Theoclymenus, into the traditions of the epic.¹⁹ Theoclymenus appears to be a purely invented person who was needed for the dramatic purposes of the narrative. He was meant to show the noble and generous character of Telemachus in accepting him as a suppliant, and also later he provided a convenient foil to the suitors, prophesying their doom while they mocked him, and leaving them to the fate, which even his warning could not avert. Homer provided a family tree at the point where he was introduced. Melampus, as he explains had two sons in Argos, Antiphates, the grandfather of Amphiaraus, and Mantius. The latter with his appropriately invented name, suggesting the Greek word for prophet (*mantis*), was the father of Polypheides of whom Homer says that Apollo made him the best diviner after (his cousin) Amphiaraus. Theoclymenus, then, whom Homer was to use for a warning prophecy, was the son of this distinguished father and was evidently meant to have inherited the gift. It is interesting to note that in spite of the emphatic praise of Polypheides as a prophet he has scarcely any place in Greek tradition. In fact he seems to be largely if not entirely an invention of Homer, created to link Theoclymenus with Melampus and carry through the picture of a family of hereditary diviners.

It is not surprising that Theoclymenus himself is not a prophet of the old folklore type. He shows no tendency to interpret the language of birds. He can explain an omen of a hawk slaying a pigeon, but this involves no suggestion of the methods of Dodona;²⁰ omens from birds' flight and behaviour are frequent in the epic, but also were still conventional in classical periods. When he came to his great moment of prophecy foretelling the doom of the suitors, Theoclymenus used the new form of ecstatic vision. It is the first instance in Greek literature of this kind of utterance and represents the emergence of the Apolline oracle in its normal pattern. To find it grafted onto the stem of the Melampodidae is an indication of the development of Greek religion.

The *Odyssey* is not the only instance where one may find a prophet linked arbitrarily with the family of Melampus. The same process can be traced both in connection with a traditional folk tale and with a historic family. The folk tale is the legend of Polyidos ('the much-knowing') and the raising from the dead of

Glaucus, the son of Minos, king of Crete.²¹ The details need not be described here but it contains such primitive features as a puzzle used to test the prophet capable of finding and resuscitating the child. Polyidos works by means of birds and snakes, but differs from Melampus to the extent that he does not interpret their speech, but takes omens from their behaviour or imitates it. Apart from this legend Polyidos is associated with the neighbourhood of Corinth and Megara, where, like Melampus, he had traditionally acted as a purifier as well as a prophet. Probably his primitive folk tales left him without local habitation or genealogy, but at least by the fifth century he was securely linked to the Melampodidae. His father was named Coiranus ('ruler'), a vaguely royal name and he was thus identified with the Polyidos whom Homer names in the *Iliad* as a prophet-king of Sicyon.²² The connection with Melampus was achieved by making Coiranus the son of Cleitus. Homer in the *Odyssey* mentioned Cleitus together with Polyphides as one of the grandchildren of Melampus. 'But indeed Cleitus was snatched away by golden-throned Dawn for the sake of his beauty that he might be among the Immortals.' By this picturesque sentence Homer seems in the context to imply that Cleitus had no mortal family, but this did not deter the fifth-century tradition as represented by Pherecydes from making him, through Coeranus, the grandfather of Polyidos.²³ An alternative version provided Abas as a third son of Melampus, unmentioned by Homer, and made him father of Polyidos. In each instance we see how the text of the Melampodid genealogy in the *Odyssey* was used as the basis for connecting Polyidos with the family by arbitrary additions such as Homer never conceived.

The other instance where a historic family is linked with the Melampodids is the genealogy of the seers at Olympia, the Clytiadae. Their ancestor Clytius is described as a son of Amphion, the son of Amphiaras. Amphion, one of the Epigoni in the Theban legend, was the subject of much complicated mythology, mostly of post-epic date and based on local traditions. According to one account he had married Arsinoe, the daughter of Phegeus, king of Psophis, and his grave was shown there with the legend that he had been murdered by the brothers of Arsinoe because he had been unfaithful to her. Pausanias records the tradition that Clytius had been a son borne to Amphion by Arsinoe, and that on his father's death he had fled from Psophis to Elis and became the ancestor of the

Clytiads of Olympia.²⁴ The occasion for the mention in Pausanias of this genealogy is a monument at Olympia in honour of a Clytiad, Eperastos, who had won the foot race in armour at the games. On his statue base he described himself as follows: 'I boast to be a prophet by race of the holy-tongued Clytiads, blood from the godlike Melampodidae.' No doubt Pausanias has reproduced correctly the local tradition as accepted in later times. If we examine it critically, it is noticeable that Clytius is otherwise entirely without legendary setting. He is not the subject of any stories that have come down to us and his name is significantly colourless. It simply means 'famous' and as such is highly appropriate to the eponymous ancestor of a distinguished family, but does not imply any body of traditions characterizing this individual.

The Clytiads were associated with another family, the Iamids, in the operation of the oracle at Olympia. They appear occasionally in literature in this connection from the fifth century B.C., but our best evidence is in the inscriptional records from Olympia which, with some large gaps, give the names of the prophets from 30 B.C. to A.D. 265.²⁵ In this period of three hundred years the post of 'mantis' (prophet) was shared equally between the two families. Usually one representative was chosen from each. In the last period from A.D. 185 the families normally provided two each. Occasional unevennesses of distribution are to be explained (with Weniger) as due to such human accidents as the temporary failure of a prophet of the right age in one family. The post was evidently held for life, and some prophets had very long tenures. There is no sign that one family was senior to the other in status, as the names appear in either order of precedence. Weniger has also traced what appear to be instances of adoption from one family to the other, and would explain this practice on the hypothesis that careful efforts were made to guarantee that the two lines continued nominally at least.

This phenomenon of an oracle-centre run by a pair of families is remarkable. Even the control by one hereditary line of prophets would be unusual in historic times. At Delphi for instance the Pythia was chosen as an individual and even the rank of *Prophetes* does not appear to have descended by heredity. The nearest analogy there is provided by the *Hosioi* who claimed descent from Deucalion. At Dodona the original prophets were the Selloi, but this appears to have been the name of a clan rather than a single

family, and there is no evidence for hereditary prophets and prophetesses in historic times. The nearest parallel in an oracular shrine is that of Apollo at Didyma near Miletus where the family which traced their descent from a legendary Branchus, beloved of Apollo, supplied the priests and gave a name to the place in the archaic period. Generally, of course, hereditary priesthoods were common enough in Greece. So the persistence of this principle among the prophets at Olympia can be explained as indicating the long tradition and the conservatism of the place.

The simultaneous sharing of these functions between two families is even more remarkable. Weniger would put it down to them representing two different geographical groups, Pisatis and Elis. In one way his hypothesis is somewhat confirmed by the inscriptions, as the names of the Iamids and Clytiads are followed by letters of the alphabet which apparently indicate the tribal connection of the individual and these are never the same for members of the different families. The tribal organization of this period is certain to have had largely a local basis. If we look instead at their legendary origins the Clytiads, so far as their limited traditions help, seem to be derived from Arcadia and the mountains, while the Iamids hailed from Triphylia southwards. We shall also see that there were traditions of two different methods of divination at Olympia. So though the Iamids were credited with practising both, we may wonder whether originally one family was associated with each.²⁶

The Clytiads, as we have seen, had little legendary background preserved in our tradition. The Iamids were more fortunate. Largely through the circumstance that Pindar in 468 B.C. wrote an ode in honour of Agesias of Syracuse who had won a victory in the mule-race at Olympia, we have a detailed account of the origin of the Iamids.²⁷ Agesias claimed to be descended from an Iamid who had joined in the foundation of Syracuse, and in his honour Pindar tells the story of the eponym of the family: Pitane, living by the Eurotas, had been united to Poseidon, and bore a daughter, Evadne, whom she concealed until she sent her to Aepytyus, an Arcadian king ruling at Phaisana. There Evadne was brought up till Apollo fell in love with her, and she conceived a son. Aepytyus detecting that Evadne was pregnant set off to Delphi to enquire about her offspring. But before his return Evadne bore her child whom she left exposed in a dark thicket. Aepytyus,

however, returned with the news that the Delphic oracle had announced that Apollo himself was the father of the child to be born to Evadne and that he would be an outstanding prophet whose race would never fail. Search was made and the infant was found five days after his birth hidden in a bed of violets and fed by two snakes which had brought him honey. In allusion to the violets (*ion*) he was called Iamus, and grew up at the court of Aeptytus. On reaching manhood he went down into the river Alpheius and called on his grandfather Poseidon and his father Apollo to give him a royal kingship. But his father summoned him instead to follow him to the sheer rock of the lofty hill of Cronos at Olympia 'and there he bestowed on him a double treasure of prophecy, meanwhile to hear the voice that knows not lies and when Heracles, whose skill is bravery, should come, that reverend shoot of the Alcadae, and should establish in dedication to his father the most frequented of festivals and greatest foundation of games, at that time on the highest top of the altar of Zeus he bade set up an oracle-centre'.

The Iamids claimed descent from this eponymous ancestor. But the story as told by Pindar contains many peculiar features which call for elucidation. The double descent from gods is remarkable, but made the more peculiar by the way in which Pitane apparently is able to send her child by Poseidon to Aeptytus to foster. The normal pattern of Greek legend provides that the mother of a child begotten by a god is married to a mortal man who acts as foster father. Pitane's relation to Aeptytus remains unexplained, just as the occurrence of a second liaison with a god is unparalleled. The children of such unions in Greek mythology were normally sons, not daughters, and so the possibility of successive generations of children of the gods did not arise. It is also worth remarking that Pitane, the more distant ancestress, seems curiously inappropriate. From Pindar's reference to the Eurotas, it is clear that she is the eponymous heroine of Pitane, one of the five villages of Sparta, and as such seems strangely distant and unconnected with Olympia. Aeptytus is much more closely placed for his Phaisana was identified in antiquity with Phrixa which lay in the Pisatis.²⁸ The explanation of this Spartan origin of the Iamids is probably to be found, as Wilamowitz suggested, in the famous branch of the family which from a date shortly before 479 B.C. (the battle of Plataea) were hereditary diviners to the Spartans.²⁹ An original

genealogy tracing descent from Evadne was extended a further generation so as to link with the eponym of the village of which Tisamenus and his brother became adopted citizens.

Herodotus (who, as Wilamowitz reminded us, had visited Pitane) tells the picturesque story. Tisamenus, the son of Antiochus, an Elean of the clan of the Iamids had consulted the Delphic oracle and had been told that he would carry off five of the greatest contests.³⁰ So he took this as a prophecy of success in the Olympic pentathlon and entered for it, only to fail by drawing with an opponent. The Pythian Apollo, of course, could not err; evidently there had been a mistake in the interpretation. The Spartans discovered the correct explanation. The contests intended by the oracle were military, not athletic, and it had foretold that he would act as diviner before battle for the victorious side on five great occasions. Accordingly the Spartans attempted to induce Tisamenus to act as leader in battle, together with the kings. But Tisamenus claimed as his fee the unique privilege of being made a Spartan citizen, and when there was difficulty over conceding this price for his services, he raised it by insisting on having the same right also for his brother, Agias. The family can be traced in literary tradition at Sparta to the end of the fifth century B.C., but in inscriptional records they go much further, appearing intermittently as prophets till at least the second century A.D.

We can thus suppose that Pitane was an addition to the Iamid genealogy made by Tisamenus before 479 B.C. and accepted by Pindar in 468 B.C. But is this the only accretion in the legend? Wilamowitz called attention to another peculiarity. The snakes which ministered honey to the child, Iamus, may be regarded as fulfilling the usual function in mythology of the animal that feeds the exposed infant. But is this all? Surely, like the snakes who showed their gratitude to Melampus, they should have given him the gift of prophecy by licking his ears. Wilamowitz notices the appropriateness of this analogy, but abandons it with the passing remark 'The Iamids were no watchers of birds'.³¹ But is this correct? Pindar in a vaguely impressive phrase described the earlier of the two gifts of prophecy possessed by the Iamids as 'to hear the voice that is unknowing of lies'. This is not likely to mean intuitive inspiration. For, particularly in primitive periods, the Greeks did not picture the gods as communicating to men by an inward voice

or private intimation. It is more likely to mean some actual sound. On this account Weniger has spent some space in discussing this description as applying to what the Greeks called 'cledones'—chance utterances, spoken with some ordinary meaning, but interpreted by the seer as conveying some occult significance not intended by the original speaker.³² This notion is as old as the *Odyssey* and it might well be that Pindar intended it. But 'the sheer rock of the lofty hill of Cronos' rising some five hundred feet above the Altis does not seem a particularly suitable place for this form of augury, which was typically one of the market-place. In fact Olympia in the far past, before the founding of the Olympic games, would not have been a spot in which to search for spoken omens. If, however, we suppose alternatively that 'the voice' was the voice of birds we have an entirely suitable medium for use by prophets whose oracular seat was the hill of Cronos.

This interpretation must remain conjectural because in no other place is this method of divination ascribed to the Iamids. But it is perhaps worth noting in this connection that there was evidence at a later date which might suggest that the power to understand the speech of animals was possessed by this family. Pausanias described seeing at Olympia a statue of Thrasyboulus the son of Aeneas, an Iamid, who had taken part as prophet in the battle of Mantinea in 244 B.C.³³ The statue was remarkable in two features. Thrasyboulus appeared standing with a gecko-lizard crawling up his right shoulder while beside him lay a dog shown as sacrificed and split in two to expose its liver. Pausanias evidently understood the latter animal to be intended to represent a victim used by Thrasyboulus for divination, and he spends some lines discussing the different animals employed for this purpose in various places. His conclusion is that the use of dogs was unique and was to be taken as personal to Thrasyboulus. The presence of the 'galecotes' (gecko-lizard) he does not discuss. But as long as a century ago Welcker suggested that it indicated that Thrasyboulus could understand the language of animals and that this was the reason why it was shown crawling towards his ear.³⁴

It is likely that some such symbolism lay behind the representation, for the 'galecotes' was apparently regarded as a prophetic animal. In Sicily there existed a native clan of Sicel prophets who were known as the Galcotae (the Gecko-Lizards).³⁵ Why they were

so called is never explained in our ancient sources, but presumably the animal was used by them in divination, and gave its name to the clan. In the few stories and references to their prophetic activities which can be found they usually appear as interpreters of natural marvels and dreams—a line of activity which would be perfectly consistent with their having also been original diviners of the movements of lizards.

The mention of the Galcotae curiously brings us back to Dodona. For among the few responses of that oracle recorded in literature is one which linked together the Galcotae and the Telmessians, both hereditary clans of native diviners.³⁶ Galcotes, the son of Apollo and Themisto, the daughter of Zabios, king of the Hyperboreans, consulted Dodona at the same time as another son of Apollo, Telmessus. The oracle told the one (Telmessus) to sail to the sunrise, the other (Galcotes) to the sunset, till they came where an eagle snatched the limbs of a sacrifice which they were offering. There they were each to found an altar. So Galcotes went to Sicily and Telmessus to Caria where he founded the sanctuary of Apollo Telmessios. This rather trivial story is modelled on the pattern of a typical legend of colonization. The enquirer is sent to the far distance with instructions to stop and settle where some rather improbable omen is fulfilled. Even the idea of two colonists dispatched to opposite directions recurs in the Delphic story about Lacijs and Antiphemus, the founders of Phaselis in Lycia and Gela in Sicily.³⁷ This oracle, in fact, looks to be the older and the model on which the Dodonacan legend was framed. The priests of Zeus had a purpose in their invention. For evidently they intend to link with themselves and claim the credit for establishing the two chief clans of native diviners whom the Greeks had encountered in Sicily and Asia Minor.³⁸ The date of this invention is not likely to be early. In fact a probable occasion would be at the time when King Pyrrhus was attempting the conquest of Sicily from the Carthaginians. Curiously enough this would have fallen within the lifetime of Thrasyboulos, the Iamid who himself also had friendly relations with Epirus. For he was responsible for erecting a statue in honour of King Pyrrhus at Olympia.³⁹ All this suggests that in the Hellenistic period the prophets of Dodona and Olympia were well aware of each other and of the Galcotae of Sicily, with whom they felt some kinship.

If we return to Thrasyboulos' own monument, the two animals

represented on it—the lizard on his shoulder and the severed dog at his feet—seem to indicate, allusively and in their most peculiar forms, two distinct methods of divination—that which interpreted the behaviour of animals and that which drew conjectures from sacrifices. If this was the intention behind the monument, it beautifully incorporated the two types of prophecy practised by the Melampodids. For Melampus, as we have seen, interpreted the voices of birds and it was probably this procedure which Pindar attributed allusively to the Iamids when they chose for their site ‘the sheer rock of the lofty mount of Cronos’. This steep hill rises some 500 feet directly overlooking the sanctuary at Olympia. One may perhaps picture that when the north-west Peloponnese was invaded in the dark ages of the Dorian invasion the settlers who came from Epirus carried with them traditions of a Zeus who would be worshipped amid trees and expressed his will by the voice of birds. They could not find in the Alpheios valley a suitable oak tree to be the centre of his cult, but the wooded hill overlooking the confluence of the Cladeos with the greater river made a convenient place for bird-watchers.

It is possible that Olympia had already a reputation for sanctity and even for oracular consultation. But if so it was not as the home of Zeus, but of a female deity—Earth or Demeter. Our evidence for this is not early as it centres chiefly in Pausanias’ mention of the sanctuary of Ge. This had a very primitive type of altar made of the sacrificial ashes like the great altar of Zeus which we shall shortly describe. Pausanias recorded that the oracle of the Earth goddess among other more ancient features was said to be there and that there was also an altar of Themis above the place called the ‘Mouth of the Cavern’.⁴⁰

The German excavations failed to shed any particular light on this part of the site at Olympia. So we must depend on our literary evidence. Clearly in Pausanias’ time the oracle of the Earth goddess did not function as such, but a tradition of it as very ancient had persisted. The place with its altar of Themis had evidently been remodelled on the pattern of Delphi where Themis, traditionally the daughter and successor of Ge at the oracle of the Earth Goddess, was believed to have preceded Apollo, just as Zeus at Olympia had had his female predecessor. The arrangement at Olympia which Pausanias knew may well have been a late fourth-century restoration dating from the period when Delphi and

Olympia were in close and friendly relationship. But it would be a mistake to suppose that the tradition of a previous oracle of the Earth Goddess was simply imported ready-made from Delphi at this late date.⁴¹

Olympia contained in several different places indications that Zeus had not been the original deity of the site, but had taken over the leading position from a goddess associated with the earth whose worship then continued in various forms grouped round the new major cult. This hypothesis best explains the fact that Hera, not Zeus was the first deity to be honoured with a large temple at Olympia. It was the earliest full-scale peripteral temple in Doric style to be erected on the Greek mainland and its lower structure of stone, on which a sun-dried brick and wooden building was supported, is still one of the most impressive of early Greek monuments dating from the end of the seventh century. Of course the cult of Zeus at his open-air altar had been introduced long before this date, but Hera would not have been likely to be honoured with the first stone temple if her independent cult had not already been strong in primitive times, and actually she had like Zeus an altar of ashes which stood in front of her temple and no doubt determined its site. In fact she and Ge are the only deities besides Zeus whose altar was of this peculiar type. So it is reasonable to suppose that their cults may have preceded his. The third example of a female deity who seems to have an early and special position at Olympia was Demeter Chamyne. Her shrine stood near one end of the Olympic stadion and her priestess had the unique privilege of sitting on an altar facing the judges and watching the Olympic games. This right would probably date from the time when the games were founded and the cult of Demeter was already established on the site.⁴²

These three examples serve to confirm the picture that cults of female goddesses connected with the earth in various forms preceded Zeus, and may therefore be supposed to have included an oracular ritual which perhaps (like the example at Aegeira in Achaëa which survived till late) included divination by a priestess who sought inspiration by entering a cave or hollow in the ground.⁴³ However, the advent of Zeus led to the superseding of the practice. All that survived was a traditional spot in the Altis consecrated to the Earth goddess. The male prophets who came with the advent of Zeus sought their inspiration either on the top of the hill

of Cronos from the birds or from the sacrifices to Zeus at his altar in the sanctuary below.

This altar itself was of a very peculiar type which Pausanias describes with some care;⁴⁴ 'It has been made out of the ashes of the thighs of the victims sacrificed to Zeus. . . . The perimeter of the first step of the altar, called the Prothysis, is 125 feet and the perimeter of the superimposed altar on top of the Prothysis is 32 feet. The height of the altar as a whole reaches 22 feet. The victims themselves are stood on the lower part, the Prothysis, for slaughter. Then they carry up their thighs to the highest part of the altar and make a burnt offering of them there. Upward ramps lead to the Prothysis from each side made of stone. From the Prothysis to the top of the altar the ramps are constructed of ash. As far as the Prothysis maidens and married women may go up at any time when they are not excluded from the Olympic sanctuary, but from this to the topmost part of the altar only men may ascend. Sacrifices are offered to Zeus even when there is no festival-gathering by private individuals, and once daily by the Eleans. The prophets observe each year the date of the nineteenth of the month Elaphios and fetch the ash from the Prytaneion, and after they have kneaded it with water from the Alpheus they use it to plaster the altar. If the ash were kneaded with other water it would not be possible to produce clay with it, and this is the reason why the river Alpheus is regarded as the dearest river of all to Olympian Zeus.' Pausanias concludes his description with references to the belief that kites practically never snatched meat from the sacrifices at Olympia. If they did, it was a very unfavourable omen for the sacrificer. Also the Eleans had learnt from Heracles to sacrifice specially to Zeus Apomyios so as to drive off flies from the meat across the river Alpheus. From Heracles, too, was derived the custom of using only the wood of the white poplar and no other as fuel.

Evidently to Pausanias the great altar of Zeus was not only important as a centre of cult, but its construction out of the ashes of sacrifices was a very rare, though not quite unique, circumstance. He refers for analogy to the great altar at Pergamum, where it is reasonable to suppose the resemblance was due to Hellenistic imitation. There was also one of Hera on Samos, but on such a small scale that Pausanias evidently did not regard it as strictly comparable. Also an altar at Didyma, made from victims'

blood and claimed too as a foundation of Heracles, had grown to no great size. So the great altar of Zeus at Olympia retained its pre-eminence. At the same time Pausanias' account is not inconsistent with the theory which we have already suggested that it may have been the altar of Hera or the altar of Ge, similarly constructed out of ashes, which was the original prototype on a small scale from which the great altar of Zeus was derived. The elaborate ritual of building it up on one day each year with ashes partly fetched from the Prytaneion and water from the local river was evidently evolved on the spot.

In spite of Pausanias' description with his precise measurements archaeologists have found themselves unable to agree on the exact form of the altar. Its approximate site has been identified in the space between Pelopion and the temples of Zeus and Hera. There, as elsewhere in the sacred area there was an early layer of ashes and small votive objects, but no ascertainable remains of the altar itself. Probably in the Byzantine period Christians had levelled this ancient relic of paganism.

The picture that Olympia had originally been important not only as a cult centre in general, but specifically as an oracle, is entirely in agreement with the account of Strabo. He remarks: 'It won its distinction originally through the oracle of the Olympian Zeus and, after it had failed, none the less the glory of the sanctuary persisted and developed to the extent that we know on account of the festival and the Olympic contest.'⁴⁵ We have assumed a possible earlier stage of an oracle of Earth, but this is not inconsistent. It is a pity that Strabo has neither described the method of oracular procedure, nor explained what he means by its failure. That the custom of divination was primitive and important at Olympia is probably right, but it might have been better expressed if Strabo had said that in historic times it tended to be completely over-shadowed in importance by the games. Also in accordance with this shift of emphasis the method of divination which came to be used chiefly, if not exclusively, was the one best fitted to suit the occasion of a major festival.

Pindar, in quoting Apollo's instructions to Iamus had written: 'and whenever Heracles . . . should come and should establish to his father the greatest foundation of games, (the Iamids) should set up at that time on the highest top of the altar of Zeus an oracle-centre'. In another Olympic ode Pindar amplifies the picture.⁴⁶

He addresses Olympia 'the mother of goldencrowned contests, the mistress of truth, where prophet men finding indications in the burnt sacrifices make trial of Zeus of the bright thunderbolt, whether he takes any heed of the men who strive to win mighty goodness with their spirit and a relief from their toils'. The oracle-centre on the top of the altar of Zeus was the place to divine the god's will by the offerings made to him. The technical term (*empyra*) used for burnt sacrifices implies that the omens were not found in the sacrificed victim when dissected, but from the behaviour of the sacrifice itself when set alight. That these omens from sacrifice might even be used appropriately by an expert in divination from birds is picturesquely illustrated in the *Antigone*.⁴⁷ There when the disastrous outcome of Creon's action is being disclosed, Sophocles represents Tiresias as describing how first he had placed himself on his ancient seat for observing birds. Their behaviour, when scrutinized for omens, had alarmed him by their savage cries and attacks on each other. So he proceeded next to consult omens by sacrifice (*empyra*) on the burning altar with equally horrifying results from the failure of the flames to burn brightly and the significant bursting of the gall-bladder and other such indications.

Sophocles was probably not drawing on old traditions, but on contemporary practice, in describing Tiresias' oracular methods. It shows that there was nothing absurd in supposing that diviners could use both omens from birds and omens from sacrifices in their consultations. But actually all our historic references to the practices at Olympia allude to consultation by sacrifices. The earliest mentions and the most explicit are those in Pindar. The scholia gives us further details in explanation.⁴⁸ On the Iamids the commentary explains that up to the writer's own day (presumably in the Hellenistic period at earliest) they use the skins of the victims. 'They take up the skins of the sacrificial animals and put them on the fire and thus make their prophecy. But Heraclides (the late fourth century B.C. author) in his book "Concerning oracle-centres" says that they base their prophecy on the skins by examining the splits in them whether they are straight or not.' This further comment from Heraclides seems inconsistent with the general picture in that at first sight his description seems to imply that the Iamids simply examined the skins after they were flayed. But in a very abbreviated scholium perhaps it is meant that

we should combine the two descriptions. From the first sentence alone we get a picture of the Iamids placing the sacrificial skins on the flames and watching them burn as a source of prophetic indications. But possibly Heraclides meant that after the skins had been laid on the fire and allowed to heat till they cracked they were then taken off and examined for omens from the lines of cleavage. It is unwise to be too positive about the methods intended, especially as it would not be surprising if at different periods the Iamids and Clytiads had varied their procedure.

Before Pindar's contemporary references there is in Herodotus a story which, though not an account of an official consultation of the oracle at Olympia, has a curiously appropriate setting. Herodotus is describing the career of Pisistratus as tyrant of Athens and in a typical fashion starts with an omen before his birth.⁴⁹ 'Hippocrates' (the father of the future tyrant) 'was a private citizen and when he was a spectator at the Olympic games a great and ominous miracle happened. For after he had sacrificed the victims the cauldrons which stood by and were full of flesh and water began to boil without fire and poured over. Chilon the Spartan who happened to be present and observed the miracle advised Hippocrates preferably not to bring home a wife who could bear him children or, if he happened to have a wife, to send her away, or if he happened to have a son, to disown him. Thereafter Pisistratus was born to Hippocrates and, as Herodotus implies, by becoming that abominable thing, a tyrant, justified Chilon's grimly prophetic warnings.

Hippocrates was evidently not to be pictured as making a formal consultation of the oracle at Olympia. No doubt it was possible and even usual, to sacrifice to Zeus without asking for a prophetic response. So also the extraordinary omen does not actually occur in the burnt sacrifice itself, and the interpretation is not supplied by the official priesthood, but by a Spartan bystander. At the same time the Spartan is one of the seven wise men of later legend and the choice of Olympia as the scene of the happening seems to be at least partly dictated by the fact that the altar of Zeus there was the appropriate place for omens derived from sacrificial victims. It is interesting to note that the scene is not set at Delphi. Generally the legends about Greek tyrants represent them as foretold by the Pythian Apollo. But the dynasty of Pisistratus were not acceptable to the Delphic authorities, who in the end were the

great supporters of the Alcmaeonids who overthrew them, and so it is appropriate enough that the scene of the foretelling of Pisistratus' birth is set, not at Delphi, but at Olympia with a suggestion of the proper style of local divination. No doubt the legend grew up long before Herodotus' day, and may well be contemporary with the latter part of the Pisistratid tyranny. Its bitterly hostile tone suits better that period than later when the reign of Pisistratus come to be regarded in retrospect by the Athenians as a golden age.

Already Pindar in the eighth Olympian ode had indicated as the typical subject for enquiry at the oracle the prospects of Olympic athletes. But clearly in the fifth century and even later that was not the only possible question. Sophocles in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* had grouped Olympia with Delphi and Abae in Boeotia as typical seats of prophetic enquiry.⁵⁰ The Chorus asserts that if the truth of oracles is not established the divine rule of law is overthrown. 'No longer shall I go in worship to the untouched navel of the earth, nor to the temple at Abae nor at Olympia.' The passage is an interesting literary echo, but of itself would prove little or nothing about the contemporary practice of Sophocles' day at Olympia, since the shrine of Abae grouped with it by the poet had been sacked by Xerxes' army and never restored.

However, a few references in a contemporary historian show that it was possible for Olympia to be consulted on serious affairs of state. Xenophon, when recording the Spartan war against Elis at the end of the fifth century, gives several grounds of complaint against the Eleans.⁵¹ One was the exclusion of the Spartans from the Olympic games of 420 B.C. and the punishment of a Spartan who had managed to enter a team clandestinely for the chariot-race. Another charge was that 'on a later occasion when [King] Agis had been sent to sacrifice to Zeus in accordance with a certain prophecy the Eleans had prevented him from praying for victory in war, alleging that it was an ancient custom that Greeks might not ask for an oracle on the subject of a war with Greeks, and so he went away without sacrificing.' Unfortunately Xenophon has left the occasion without any precise date. The limits are that it was after the Olympic games of 418 B.C. which he has just mentioned and before the war, of which it was a pretext, at the end of the century. Clearly the war against Greeks which was to be the subject of the enquiry was the Peloponnesian war and since Agis spent most of the latter years of it from 413 B.C. at Decelea, the

most likely occasion for his unsuccessful visit to Olympia was immediately before that, at the time when hostilities between Athens and Sparta were being resumed.

The prophecy which was made the excuse for the consultation of Zeus was probably something brought up by the Pythii as the King's religious advisers. The underlying purpose may well have been to induce the Eleans to disown their former allies, the Athenians, and join in a religious demonstration in favour of the Peloponnesian League. But the Eleans on ritual grounds disallowed the enquiry, which was evidently to have been answered by the technique of observing a sacrificial victim, and so maintained a neutrality for which the Spartans took occasion to punish them after the end of the Peloponnesian war.

But while Agis' enquiry had never been carried through to its conclusion, another Spartan king not long after did consult Olympia successfully on a ritual question of high military importance. In 387 B.C. during the closing years of the Corinthian war the Argives had invented an ingenious method for staving off a Spartan invasion: whenever the Spartans were about to cross their frontier, they proclaimed the festival of the Carneia, and no good Dorians could lightly violate its sacred truce, even when it was being celebrated in defiance of ordinary practice by a process of juggling with the calendar.⁵² At last the Spartans decided on sending an expedition under Agesipolis, who, after he had offered the preliminary sacrifices and found them auspicious went to collect oracular authority for his unorthodox breach of truce before crossing the frontier. He began at Olympia where on consulting the oracle his enquiry was whether he would be right in sacred law in not accepting the truce if the Argives offered it at any other than the correct time. The god gave the sign that he would be right in not accepting the truce. Thus fortified Agesipolis went to Delphi where he contented himself with asking Apollo whether he agreed with his father on the subject of the truce, and the oracle gave the same answer. Agesipolis' complicated procedure can best be explained on the supposition that the Spartans were very conscious at this time that they had little hold on Delphi, while Elis had been reduced by Agis only a few years before. Therefore in a rather naive way Agesipolis first put his question to Olympia where he could be sure of a sympathetic answer and then forced Delphi to agree by use of the theological argument, which we have

already discussed, that the Pythian Apollo claimed to be the mouthpiece of Zeus. Presumably in the early fourth century Olympia was normally of such slight standing in ritual enquiries that its answer alone was insufficient, but needed the reinforcement of Delphi's greater prestige, however peculiar the method by which it was obtained. Actually the extraordinary episode was not forgotten, but reappears as an example in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and later, somewhat garbled, in Plutarch.

It is possible that the Spartans consulted Olympia again in highly peculiar circumstance about a ritual question. In 243/2 B.C. Lysandros the ephor was plotting to overthrow the Spartan king, Leonidas II. He adopted a line of attack based on an archaic practice of the ephors. 'At eight-yearly intervals they take a clear and starless night and sit in silence gazing fixedly at the heavens. Then if a star shoots from one quarter to another, they put the kings on trial, on the ground that they are sinning greatly against the deity, and suspend them from their office, until either from Delphi or from Olympia an oracle shall come to help the kings who have been convicted.'⁵³ The custom was evidently very primitive in origin as is shown by such features as the periodic check on the kingship and the idea that the king's sin against the gods would lead to their displeasure against the state. Curiously enough this is the only occasion when the Spartan custom is explicitly mentioned in our ancient authorities. Lysandros carried out his scheme in accordance with the traditional pattern. The observation of the sign was announced, and accusers suborned by Lysandros charged Leonidas II with the offences of begetting children by a foreign woman and having previously gone out of Sparta with a view to settling abroad. The case was decided against Leonidas who first fled to sanctuary in the temple of Athena and later retired to exile in Tegea. At no stage is it recorded that either Delphi or Olympia were actually consulted. In a detailed discussion elsewhere of the deposing of Spartan kings I have suggested that Lysandros had an analogy for his procedure in the deposition of Demaratus in 491 B.C. On that occasion we know that the Delphic oracle was actually consulted. But, as I have suggested there was a strong reason in the third century B.C. why this procedure could not so conveniently be followed. Ever since 280 B.C. when the Spartan king, Areus, had tried unsuccessfully to break the Aetolian control of Delphi, the Spartans had been

unpopular there. Hence it would not be surprising if Lysandros did not risk the failure of his scheme by leaving the decision at a critical point to the Pythia. He probably suggested Olympia was a preferable alternative even though there was no analogy for the Spartan state to consult it in these particular circumstances. The action of Agesipolis a century and a half earlier showed that Olympia could be used as the arbiter in high ritual questions. In practice the oracle may never have been consulted as Leonidas, unlike King Demaratus, gave up any attempt to contest the case.

This was probably the last instance when the Olympic oracle had a chance of playing a major part in Greek affairs. But though they have left no trace in literature or archaeology, we can take it as probable that private individuals when making offerings to Zeus at his great altar asked the hereditary prophets to interpret the omens and answer some question. Particularly the four-yearly recurrence of the Olympic games must have provided occasion as in the past for special offerings and specific consultations about success in the games. An echo of this activity is preserved among the collection of satiric poems in the *Greek Anthology*.⁵⁴ The author, Lucilius, wrote in the first century A.D. and his purpose in writing these short poems was evidently to make fun of the ambiguous style of oracle-mongers. In each instance the prophet Olympus is consulted by an athlete: 'Onesimus the boxer came to the prophet Olympus wishing to learn if he were going to live to old age, and he said "Yes, if you give up the ring now, but if you go on boxing, Saturn is your horoscope." [i.e. your star is the most unlucky.] Onesimus the wrestler and the pentathlist Hylas and the runner Menecles came to the prophet Olympus wishing to know which of them was going to win at the games, and he, after inspecting the sacrifice, said "you will all win—unless anyone passes you, sir, or unless anyone throws you, sir, or unless anyone runs past you, sir".'

It is not necessary to look for any historic foundation to these enquiries. The fact that Onesimus is the name of a boxer in one and of a wrestler in the other suggests that they are fictitious. The scene is evidently set in Olympia. Not only are the enquirers all athletes, but the prophet is named Olympus and in the second poem it is explicitly mentioned that he prophesied after inspecting the sacrifice. Actually, the name Olympus, though doubtless chosen by Lucilius to indicate the scene, need not itself be fictitious. As Weniger has pointed out, it was a regular family name among

the Clytiads. Five individuals so called are recorded from inscriptions after A.D. 115. So quite probably there was a contemporary of the name, known to Lucilius, whose record has been lost in the lacunae of our inscriptions between A.D. 5 and 61.

We need not end our picture of the prophets at Olympia with the feebly sarcastic epigrams of Lucilius. Though the inscriptions from the site do not record the oracular activities of the *Manteis* their ritual functions are prominently displayed both in Pausanias' description and in the contemporary monuments. In formal order they came after the Theokolos and the Spondophoroi, but had certain special responsibilities which were peculiar to their office, such as the annual plastering of the altar. In fact Weniger is justified in pointing out that until late in the history of Olympia there was no official described as the priest of Zeus (*Hiereus*). The prophets (*Manteis*) in their service at his sacrifices in effect fulfilled this honorable function.

NOTES

¹ Hom. *Od.* 15, 225 ff. and 11, 290 (where he is not named).

² Hes. *Melampodia*, fr. 160-169. *Great Eoiai*, fr. 249. For the former in particular, see Ingrid Löfler, *Die Melampodie, Versuch einer Rekonstruktion des Inhalts* (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie, no. 7, 1963).

³ The genealogy may be implied in the claim of the Amythaonidae to intelligence, Hes. fr. 205, 2. For Amythaon as the eponym of Amythaonia, cf. Rhianus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 255 f. 11.

⁴ In P.W. there are listed as homonyms three very shadowy mythological characters, each known from only one reference, two obviously pseudonymous authors of books on omens and one astrologer. The only actual persons seem to have been a grammarian and a writer on symmetry.

⁵ Diouchidas, *F. Gr. Hist.* 485 f. 9 (where his mother is Dorippe). Cf. Sch. Theocr. 3, 43 where his mother is called Rhodope.

⁶ It may be objected that μέλας in Greek is not normally used of the blackness produced by dirt, and also is usual for describing a dark or swarthy complexion. This is correct. But the original explanation of Melampus' name was probably that it was a euphemism, which tried to describe with dignity the effect of unwashed feet. Professor George Huxley has suggested as a contrast the abusive terms used of the serfs at Epidaurus, κορίπδοες, Plu. 2, 291e.

⁷ Apollod. 1, 9, 11.

⁸ Sch. Hom. *Il.* 7, 44. Eustath. 663, 40.

⁹ Sch. A.R. 1, 118 (Hes. fr. 149). P.S.I. 1301 (Merkelbach D).

¹⁰ Briefly mentioned in Hom. *Od.* 11, 290 and 15, 225; described in detail in Apollod. 1, 9, 12 and Sch. Theocr. 3, 43 and Sch. M.V. Hom. *Od.* 11, 287 (Pherecydes, *F.Gr. Hist.* 3 f. 33).

¹¹ Hes. fr. 166. Löfler, *Die Melampodie*, 35, will not accept the inconsistencies which are discussed here.

¹² Frazer in his edition of Apollodorus (Loeb).

¹³ Sch. Hom. *Od.* 11, 287 ff. Eustath. *Od.* 1685 Löffler, *Die Melampodie*, 34, stresses the importance of sticking the knife in the tree (which she describes as the boy's *Lebensbaum*) as the cause of impotence, but this aspect is not that emphasized in our ancient sources.

¹⁴ Paus. 1, 44, 8, and *I.G.* VII, 207, 208, 219, 223. The inscriptions all date from the end of the fourth century B.C. at earliest.

¹⁵ Hom. *Od.* 15, 236 ff. For the later legend, e.g. Hdt. 9, 34, and for Hera the deity offended, Bacch. 10, 44.

¹⁶ Cf. Preller-Robert, II, 251, and see also 219.

¹⁷ Cf. Preller-Robert, II, 922.

¹⁸ Hes. *fr.* 168.

¹⁹ Hom. *Od.* 15, 223 ff. and 20, 350 ff.

²⁰ Hom. *Od.* 15, 523 ff. Contrast *Od.* 20, 350 ff.

²¹ Apollod. 3, 17 ff. Hygin, *Fab.* 136. Cf. Pliny, *H.N.*, 25, 14.

²² Hom. *Il.* 5, 148.

²³ Pherecydes, *F.Gr. Hist.* 3 f. 115 and Preller-Robert, II, 201.

²⁴ Paus. 6, 17, 6. Alcmaeon's tomb, Paus. 8, 24, 7. The form Κλυτιάδης is always used in the inscriptions and cf. Hdt. 9, 33, 2. Pausanias writes Κλυτίδης as in the verses which he quotes, where it is perhaps *metri gratia*. But Weniger compares Cic. *de Div.* 1, 91.

²⁵ The inscriptions were published by W. Dittenberger and K. Purgold, *Olympia, die Ergebnisse*, II, no. 58-141, and the whole subject is discussed in detail by Ludwig Weniger, *Arch. für Religionswissenschaft*, 18 (1915), 53 ff.

²⁶ Löffler, *Die Melampodie*, 29, suggests that the Clytiads represented an Aeolian element and the lamids were linked with the foundation of the Olympic games by Heracles.

²⁷ Pindar, *Ol.* 6.

²⁸ Pherecydes, *F.Gr. Hist.* 3 f. 161; Hdt. 4, 148; Paus. 6, 21, 6.

²⁹ Wilamowitz, *Isyllos von Epidauros*, 178 ff.

³⁰ Hdt. 9, 33, 2. Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, II, no. 207. Herodotus curiously describes him as τὸν ἐόντα Ἡλείον καὶ γένεος τοῦ Ἰακιδέων Κλυτιάδην. This appears to mingle the two families. Editors since Valckenauer usually bracket Κλυτιάδην as a mistaken gloss, but, if so, a curiously well-informed one. Other possibilities are that Herodotus had made a confusion, or, as Weniger suggests that this is an early instance of the adoption from one prophetic family into the other such as is found in the Imperial period. It is significant that the imitation of Melampus and his brother, which Herodotus attributes to Tisamenus, is more appropriate if he was a descendant, i.e. a Clytiad.

³¹ Wilamowitz, *Isyllos*, 177, note 33.

³² Weniger, *Arch. f. Religionswissenschaft*, 18 (1915), 84. Löffler, *Die Melampodie*, 28, interprets it (wrongly, I think) as the unerring voice of Apollo. Did he ever give oracles at Olympia?

³³ Paus. 6, 2, 4 ff. (the statue at Olympia) and 8, 10, 5 and 8 (the battle of Mantinea).

³⁴ Welcker quoted by Weniger, *op. cit.*, 95. The same idea occurred independently to the present writer.

³⁵ The earliest literary reference to the Galcotai appears to have been in

Attic comedy (Archippus in the *Ichthyes* ap. St. Byz. s.n. Γαλεῶται), if this is to be dated about 401/0. Cf. Geissler, *Ph. U.* 30 (1925), 60 ff. There they are jokingly alluded to as Galeoi—the name of a fish. This form occurs also in Hesychius (s.v.) citing Phanodemus (*F.Gr. Hist.* 325 f. 20) and Rhinthon of Tarentum. The longer form, Galeotai and the chief mention of their activities occurred in Philistus' account of the rise of Dionysius the Elder, where they were twice consulted and gave favourable interpretations of a dream of his pregnant mother and an omen that occurred to the future tyrant (*F.Gr. Hist.* 556 f. 57 and 58, with Acl. VII. 12, 46). Pausanias (5, 23, 6) quotes Philistus as describing them as interpreters of ominous marvels and dreams. On the various derivations of Galeotai which have been proposed, see A. S. Pease on Cic. *de Div.* 1, 40 (*F.Gr. Hist.* 556 f. 57a). He is inclined to regard the name as non-Greek and unconnected with the word for 'lizard'. But I prefer to believe that, whether or not the connection is philologically correct, it was believed in ancient times. For priests and priestesses named after animals, cf. e.g. the Bulls of Poseidon (Hsch. s.v. ταῦροι), the Bears of Artemis Brauronia, the priestess who is called a πῶλος in Sparta (*IG*, 5, 1, 594 etc.), the Bees of Artemis of Ephesus, and the Peleciades discussed above.

³⁶ St. Byz. s.v. Γαλεῶται. There is a reference also to the article on Τέλμησος, unfortunately missing from our mss. Galeotes and Telmessos are grouped together in the great list of χρησμολόγοι in Clem. Alex. *Str.* 1, 21, p. 134 (Stählin).

³⁷ Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, II, no. 410, and cf. I, 64. This legend occurs as early as Theopompus (*F.Gr. Hist.* 115 f. 358).

³⁸ For the Telmessians (who like the Galeotai are usually recorded as interpreters of omens), cf. G. Daux, *Rev. Phil.* 15 (1941) 11 ff. and W. Ruge in P.W. s.v. Telmessos.

³⁹ Paus. 6, 14, 9.

⁴⁰ Paus. 5, 14, 10. Cf. Wilamowitz, *Glaube*, 1, 227. For a completely sceptical view, cf. Nilsson, *Geschichte*, 1², 171.

⁴¹ For Ge and Themis at Delphi, cf. Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 7 ff. For the friendly relations between Olympia and Delphi, cf. id. 367 and the many references in the index under Olympia.

⁴² Paus. 6, 21, 2 (the shrine) and 6, 20, 9 (the priestess at the games). If the title χαμύνη were really derived from χαμαιεύνη, χαμεύνη, as is often suggested, then there would be scope for complicated hypotheses connecting this Demeter with Dodona, cf. e.g. Weniger, *Klio*, 17 (1907), 176. There appears to be no ancient authority for the derivation. Pausanias in his description of the shrine offers as alternatives a myth connected with χαμαί and μύειν or a legend involving an eponymous hero, Chamynos. Both are equally unconvincing. Carl Robert in Preller-Robert 1, 776, note 3, may be right in suggesting a simple derivation from χαμαί.

⁴³ Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 10.

⁴⁴ Paus. 5, 13, 8. For a detailed discussion, cf. Weniger, *N. Jahrb.* 31 (1913), 241 ff. The latest reconstruction is by H. Schief, *Arch. Jahrb.* 49 (1934), 134 ff. See also on the whole subject, Nilsson, *Geschichte*, 1², 86 ff.

⁴⁵ Str. 8, 3, 30.

⁴⁶ Pi. O. 6, 68 (cf. *supra*, p. 176) and 8, 2.

⁴⁷ S. *An.* 999 ff.

⁴⁸ Sch. P *Ol.* 6. 7 citing. Dicaearchus (*FHG*, fr. 14) and cf. (without reference to Olympia) Sch. Ar. *Pa.* 1054.

⁴⁹ Hdt. 1, 59, 1.

⁵⁰ S. *O.T.* 898.

⁵¹ X. *H.* 3, 2, 22.

⁵² Cf. Parke and Wormell, I, 209 and II, no. 175.

⁵³ Plu. *Agis.* 11 and Parke, *CQ*, 39, (1945), 106 ff.

⁵⁴ *A.P.* 11, 161 and 163. Cf. Weniger, *Arch. f. Rel.* 18 (1915), 66.

CHAPTER IX

AMMON

In some ways it is easier to make positive statements about the origins of the cult of Zeus Ammon than about that of Zeus of Dodona; in other ways it is much more difficult. In so far as the cult is evidently an off-shoot of the important worship of Amon-Ra at Egyptian Thebes, a great deal of information reaching back to the distant past is available about its prototype. But from the oasis of Siwa itself scarcely any evidence is obtainable. Though visited repeatedly by travellers from the early nineteenth century, it was never open to proper exploration till after the First World War, and it has still not been the scene of any systematic survey and excavation. So though it seems that a certain number of statements can be made about Zeus Ammon with a fair degree of certainty, new evidence might at any time be forthcoming which would call for a drastic revision of all existing ideas on the subject.

To go back to the original worship of Amon in Egypt, he was the male god local to the town of Egyptian Thebes from primitive times. He was worshipped as a sun god and a god of fertility for which purposes he was thought of as a ram who was the male procreator of the universe. In Thebes he had a female consort (Mut) and a son (Chunsu), but these two other members of the Theban triad need not concern us. As a ram-god he was normally represented in Egyptian art under the form of a man with a ram's head.¹

Under the twelfth dynasty early in the second millennium B.C. by a process familiar in Egyptian religion this local deity of Thebes came to have a dominant position over all other deities. Thebes had become the capital of Egypt, and so its local god was equated with Ra, the sun god already recognized as supreme. So long as the position of Thebes as capital remained secure, Amon-Ra maintained his dominance. Even the monotheistic challenge of Akhenaton did not long survive. Also under the eighteenth dynasty the cult of Amon began to develop a useful function. It became the centre of an oracle to which important questions of state could be

referred, and this practice became more and more established until under the later Ramessids all the more important issues were decided by responses given by the high-priests of the god.

Though thus Amon-Ra had become of supreme national importance, his oracle must not be pictured in quite the same terms as a Greek oracle such as Delphi.² In particular the Egyptians did not ordinarily look to their gods to provide prophecies foretelling the future. They consulted Amon to obtain his judgement whether a particular course of action was well pleasing to the gods or not. This form of response might implicitly indicate the future, because presumably what was well pleasing would turn out well: what was not, would turn out ill. But it did not involve the production by the priests of discursive replies about the form of future events. In fact it appears that it was the enquirer, and not the priest, who gave verbal expression to the matter at issue. He wrote on a pottsherd his enquiry, often in alternative versions, and laid it before the god. The god then gave his answer not by words, but by actions. The image of Amon placed in a shrine was carried on the shoulders of his priests, and it was believed that their movements were determined by the spirit of the god. So it appears that if the image advanced towards an enquiry laid before it on the ground, the god had indicated his approval. If it recoiled, he had shown his rejection of the proposition. Clearly it was easy enough in this way to ascertain the god's will for or against a proposed line of action or to obtain his judgement on a series of possible devices by laying them all before him, in a very literal sense.

The image on its portable shrine was in effect a planchette, and the theory was that none of the human bearers was exercising volition in directing its movement. In practice one may well suspect that the high priest on important issues took care to make sure that the image gave the response that would suit his policy.

A number of *ostraka* from the time of the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties have been found which had evidently been used for this kind of enquiry by private individuals. The question was written on one side which was presumably laid face down in the path of the god's procession. On the back of the *ostrakon* was sometimes a mark, which one may suppose was intended to enable the enquirer to identify his own document from that of others.

Such then was the oracular system developed in the second millennium in connection with the cult of Amon-ra at Thebes.

But it was not confined to this location. A cult of Amon-ra became established at the Ethiopian capital of Napata, where also a ram-head god through his priests gave answers to enquiries on state policy, and a similar colonial expansion of the cult must have taken it to the oasis of Siwa.³

Siwa is the most northerly and the most distant from the Nile valley of a chain of great oases which stretch from the Kharga oasis south-west of Thebes to a point far out in the Libyan desert. It could be approached through the more southerly route by a caravan journey of some five hundred and fifty miles from Thebes in a period of about four weeks.⁴ (Herodotus who had never made the journey gave a correct enough estimate of a week as far as the Great Oasis, but placed Siwa only three days' march farther—a grotesque under-estimate.) Siwa could also be reached more directly by a route from Lower Egypt, and again could be approached straight across the Libyan desert from the North African coast. This was the shortest land journey of the three, but involved the worst travelling as there was no oasis as an intermediate stopping-place. The distance from the coast at Paraetionium (Mersa Matruh) to Ammon (Siwa) was some two hundred miles.

Thus it would have been hard to find a place less easily accessible even to the Egyptians, and to the Greeks it was the great example of the isolated sanctuary. However, even this hard and dangerous road added a certain distinction to the place. The traveller who had visited it must have felt some of the virtue of a medieval pilgrim, and the hidden situation of the shrine contributed a special distinction to its prophetic utterances.

Until the oasis of Siwa has been properly excavated, it will be impossible to state when the cult of Ammon was first set up there. Modern scholars such as Steindorff are inclined to a conservative estimate.⁵ They suppose that it cannot have been before the practice of oracular consultation was a well-established ritual at Thebes, and therefore not before the twentieth dynasty. Steindorff prefers to suppose that the settlement may even have been as late as the twenty-fifth dynasty (716-664 B.C.). Also it would not now be maintained that there was independent evidence to prove the existence of a Libyan ram-god, before Ammon. But it is probably true that the inhabitants of the oasis were not Egyptians, but Libyans. Even at the present day they still talk a language of their own. So we must picture that a colony of Egyptian priests man-

aged to settle among what was in origin a foreign people. In this respect the situation is not unlike that at Napata in Ethiopia. Perhaps it was under the special patronage of the local king—the sheikh of the oasis. For the oracular temple as later established was in close association with the royal palace. The kings of Ammon, while they probably were accustomed to admit the suzerainty of the Pharaoh, were also of a much higher degree of independence than the local governors or noblemen of Egyptian districts.

Whatever the date of the introduction of the cult of Amon-Ra to Siwa, at least it was established there at latest by the reign of the Pharaoh Amasis. For it was one of the most important results of Fakhry's expedition there in 1938 that he was able for the first time to read authoritatively the cartouche of the Pharaoh on the temple which is to be identified as the oracular shrine.⁶ This proved to bear the name of Amasis (570–526 B.C.) not of Achoris (393–380 B.C.) as Steindorff had previously read with some hesitation. So the present building must date from the third quarter of the sixth century B.C. Whether it was preceded by earlier temples of Ammon on the site only archaeological excavation could decide.

The present state of the site even without the elucidation which excavation could give corresponds quite well to the description which occurred in the popular accounts of Alexander's campaign. His visit to the oracle was the most important event in its history in Greek eyes, and all the authors concerned with the subject gave detailed pictures of the site which evidently go back to a common, nearly contemporary, source.

"The inhabitants of the Oasis of Ammon live in villages; in the middle of the oasis stands the acropolis, which is fortified with three enclosures. The first enclosure contains the palace of the ancient rulers, in the second is the *harem* of the women, children and other relatives, as well as of the guards, and lastly the temple of the god and the sacred spring in which the offerings of the god are purified. The third one is for the barracks of the soldiers and the houses of the private guards of the ruler. Away from the acropolis, at a short distance, there is a second temple of Ammon in the shade of many large trees. In its vicinity there is a spring which is called "the spring of the sun" because of its nature."⁷

The Acropolis still stands as the rock of Aghurmi, a limestone crag rising some 75 feet above the plain, and some 400 feet long in

its larger dimension. Until the nineteen-thirties it held the chief village of the oasis and it had been only with great difficulty that Western travellers had occasionally penetrated its narrow lanes. Now the inhabitants have moved elsewhere leaving the buildings on the site to crumble, both ancient and modern. For evidently the remains of the enclosures of the ancient Acropolis are still built into the modern village. The temple and the sacred well can be readily enough identified, though a full picture of their original state could only be produced after excavation.

The temple on the Acropolis, which was evidently the scene of Alexander's consultation of the oracle, consisted of two courtyards, a large one leading into a smaller. The roofed portion of the buildings was made up of a pronaos (23 × 12 feet) with opening off it the cella (10 × 18 feet). There was also a rather larger chamber beside the cella which was probably used as a sacristy, and a small corridor led round the back of the cella from the pronaos. As one might expect the temple has nothing about its plan to suggest a Greek building. But also it is not in pure Egyptian style. Fahkry can compare it with chapels of Egyptian deities built in the Bahria oasis. So probably it can be explained as designed in a style appropriate to eastern Libya. The masonry again seemed to Ricke to be un-Egyptian, and he even suggested the possibility of Greek influence. But once more it is more probably to be classed as local. The decorations, which are largely limited to the cella, are not of a proper Egyptian quality of artistry. Fahkry states that they show signs of having never been completed. Also he calls attention to one way in which they differ from the usual convention. On the right of the entrance the Pharaoh, identified as Amasis, is shown making offerings, but on the left parallel with him is represented the local prince, Sutekhirdes, similarly employed. The prince as governor under the Pharaoh would normally be shown following him in the design. Here his separate and parallel station suggests a degree of independence not found elsewhere.

There is nothing about the plan of the temple that need be explained by the purposes of the oracle. Fahkry is probably too suspicious when he conjectures that the corridor behind the cella with its niches may have been used to enable a priest to simulate the voice of the god responding to enquirers in the cella. The well of the temple mentioned in the Greek descriptions can be easily identified in an ancient well immediately adjacent to the ruins

described above. But until it is cleared of modern alterations it will be impossible to form any opinion about its exact function in the sacred rites. It is not to be confused with the Well of the Sun, reckoned one of the greatest marvels of antiquity. This, as Diodorus' account indicated, was situated in the plain some little distance from the Acropolis. It is undoubtedly to be recognized in the large spring and pool at Ummabîda, where also is the second temple, apparently a much later construction, built in the fourth century B.C. under Nectanebos II.

The marvel of the Well of the Sun was supposed to consist in the fact that the temperature went through a complete cyclic change in twenty-four hours.⁸ At midnight it was hot, reaching its maximum temperature and then gradually chilled down till it was at its coldest at noon, heating up again in the afternoon to its maximum at midnight. The chief point of the marvel lay in the complete inconsistency with the atmospheric temperatures in this semi-tropical latitude with its greatest heat at midday and its greatest cold at midnight. Actually no such phenomenon is found nowadays at Siwa in the well of Ummabîda or elsewhere, though European travellers have used thermometers on their waters. The ancients had no such devices for measurement, and it is usually supposed that, so far as any natural explanation can be found, it is to be sought in the actual contrast between the apparent temperature of the water which remains little changed while that of the air varies throughout the day. At midday the water seems cool in contrast to the sun-heated air; at night relatively warm. The fountain of the sun does not seem to have been brought into any connection with the oracle. It simply remained a local marvel, suitably to be found in such a distant and inaccessible place.

As for the operation of the oracle itself Herodotus unfortunately gives no description.⁹ He tells of the Fountain of the Sun, but on the methods of prophecy confines himself to the remark which we have already noted that those used at Dodona and Egyptian Thebes were similar. What this meant with regard to Dodona we have already discussed. Presumably Ammon, which was authentically founded from Thebes, would imitate the methods of its mother-shrine, and surely enough some of the Greek and Latin accounts of Alexander's enquiry—the same which gave the description of the site which tallied with the present remains—tell of a style of

divination which fits closely with the practices which Egyptologists conjecture for Amon-Ra at Thebes.

'The image of the god is encrusted with emeralds and other stones, and produces an entirely individual style of divination. For it is carried round on a boat of gold by eighty priests. They bear the god on their shoulders and go forward spontaneously whithersoever the will of the god leads the march by his word. A host of girls and women follow chanting songs of praise along all the road and hymning the god in traditional song.'¹⁰

The scene is somewhat graphically pictured, but actually neither Diodorus Siculus nor Curtius Rufus, who give almost identical versions of this Alexandrian source, go further and tell how exactly the procedure described was made to produce responses. Diodorus, however, in a rather cryptic phrase, mentions that the carriers 'moved in established token of the voice', by which he seems to mean that their movements were conventionally taken to indicate certain divine utterances.¹¹ Presumably as at Thebes the god's advance towards the inscribed question gave his agreement and his retreat showed his disapproval.

The scene can be almost exactly illustrated by several representations of oracular consultations in Egypt. Particularly, a papyrus dated to the fourteenth year of Psammetichus I (651 B.C.) and lately published by Richard A. Parker shows the image of the god, Amon-Ra, carried on a boat-shaped litter by twenty priests, while the enquirer stands in front facing the procession. Other such representations show musicians and singers accompanying the god. The only difference, which can be easily explained, is that in Egypt the image of the god was always carried inside a shrine whose door was concealed by a curtain and so could not be seen as the omphalos-shaped object described by Curtius Rufus. But here may simply be a difference of local usage between Thebes and Ammon without affecting the general procedure of consultation.

If then we can picture the oracle of Ammon in the oasis of Siwa as something like what we have described, how did it first come in contact with Greece? There are no references to it in Homer, and probably none in the Hesiodic corpus. (One papyrus fragment of the Eoiai, which contains references to the Ethiopians and to Zeus the god of all omens (*Panomphaios*) in neighbouring lines, at one time tempted editors to emend it so as to refer to an oracle of Zeus in Africa, but it is clear that this is very unlikely.¹²) The earliest

account which implies a general knowledge of Ammon in the Greek world is the famous passage in which Herodotus describes Croesus' testing of the oracles, and this has been regularly used by modern scholars as a proof that the Libyan oracle-centre was already well established in popular favour by the mid-sixth century.¹³ Croesus, according to the story, simultaneously sent embassies to the Greek oracle-centres: Delphi, Abac, Dodona, Amphiaraus at Oropus, Trophonius at Lebadia, and Branchidae near Miletus. Herodotus adds that he sent agents to one oracle in Libya—that of Zeus Ammon. The ambassadors were instructed to consult the god in each place on the hundredth day counting from the date of departure, and the question in each instance was to be the same: what did Croesus happen to be doing at that moment? The answers were to be brought back in writing for Croesus to compare their approximation to the truth. The story ends with the complete vindication of the Delphic oracle and the rejection of the replies of all the rest. The Pythia's utterance was framed in the famous lines which are the great manifesto of the Pythian Apollo's powers: 'I know the number of the grains of sand and the measure of the sea, and the dumb I understand and the speechless I hear.'

There can be no doubt that this legend with its superb glorification of the oracular powers of the Pythia was composed at Delphi. It was intended to be a general announcement of the prophetic skill of the local oracle and also an elaborate explanation and justification of the vast stores of gold and silver dedications from Lydia which were the chief ornament of the sanctuary. It may have been true that Croesus regarded Delphi as the greatest of the Greek oracles, but Herodotus himself elsewhere supplies the evidence that it was not the only prophetic shrine which had benefited from his generosity. He had given a shield and spear of gold to Amphiaraus and his dedications at Branchidae were comparable in weight of metal to those at Delphi. So there is no reason to take the story of the testing of the oracles as literal truth.

If we wish to date this reference to Ammon, the only real *terminus ante quem* is the date when Herodotus was told the story at Delphi. This must at latest have been before 443 B.C. but may have been after the Second Sacred War (450/49?). Of course the story quite possibly took shape originally not very long after the fall of Croesus (546 B.C.) and the proud manifesto of Apollo's

omniscience seems to be echoed by Pindar in the ninth Pythian ode (44 ff.) produced in 474 B.C. But the list of the rival oracle-centres may easily have been revised to include new rivals as they emerged. Branchidae had actually been destroyed by the Persians in 493 B.C., but it is not surprising to find it in the list. For even if the story had taken shape after that date, it had been such a famous sanctuary that it could not plausibly be omitted. On the other hand Claros (which almost certainly was functioning at this period) and Gryneum (for which it would be harder to produce evidence) were not important in the late sixth or fifth century as possible rivals of Delphi. Instead we find Abae which was destroyed by the Persians in 480 B.C. and probably never revived. As a local rival in Phocis it found a place in the list, even though it is quite possible that Croesus had no contact with it. Hence a date in the late sixth century is likely enough for the original version. But whether Ammon found a place in it then must be regarded as at least doubtful.

If then we disallow the evidence of Croesus' consultation as proving a knowledge of Ammon as an oracle in the Greek world before 500 B.C., our earliest evidence is not literary, but numismatic and occurs, just where we might expect it, on the coins of Cyrene.¹⁴ This Dorian colony had been established on the North African coast about 640 B.C. At first it had been a small settlement from Thera, but early in the sixth century, with the help of a good advertisement from the Pythian Apollo, it had considerably enlarged its numbers by a Panhellenic settlement. Also it differed from other Greek colonies in two respects. It was ruled, somewhat stormily, by a dynasty of kings, and its colonists had fraternized with the native Berbers and intermarried with them to an extent unusual for Greeks settled among barbarians. It was through the influence of the monarchy and the close association with the natives that Cyrene had built up a remarkable monopoly of settlement on the North African coast. It had exploited largely the area of modern Cyrenaica, where the sudden emergence of hilly country interrupts the straight flat line of the desert coast and gives a relatively well-watered and fertile zone for the settler. No other Greek state had obtained a foothold. Even such an independent community as Euesperidae had begun as an off-shoot of the one mother-colony.

Apollo had been the original god of Cyrene, and stories of the

Pythia's responses were linked with all the early stages of the colony's development. But in the last quarter of the sixth century the head of Zeus Ammon for the first time appears on the silver and bronze coinage of Cyrene. He is shown in profile as a male bearded head of Zeus type, but with ram's horns. This conception of a ram-god may not have seemed as strange to the people of Cyrene as one might expect. For there is some evidence that in the dark ages the Dorians of the Peloponnese had worshipped a ram-god of their own, called Carnos.¹⁵ Probably already by the sixth century he was usually, as later, equated with Apollo, but the notion of a male deity with ram's horns must have remained somewhat familiar. The Cyrenaeans, however, did not identify the Ammon of the oasis of Siwa with their Apollo, but with Zeus. The reason must have been that when they first encountered him the priests of the Oasis firmly maintained the doctrine that their god was supreme in the pantheon, and not to be compared with any younger god, however distinguished. Also probably the Greeks of Naucratis had accepted a similar identification for the Amon-Ra of Egyptian Thebes, and an equation between the two was inevitable.

The appearance of Zeus Ammon on the coinage seems to have been the first indication of a general establishment of his cult in Cyrene. By date it occurs at the time when after the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses Cyrene, too, accepted Persian suzerainty and found itself, as François Chamoux has pointed out, in the same sphere of influence as the oasis of Ammon. Herodotus has a picturesque story about Cambyses sending an expedition of fifty thousand men from Egyptian Thebes with instructions to enslave the men of Ammon and burn the oracular shrine of Zeus.¹⁶ They reached the Great Oasis safely in seven days, but, after leaving it, vanished and were never seen again. The men of Ammon alleged that the expeditionary force had all been overwhelmed and buried in a sand storm.

The story sounds to be at least exaggerated piously so as to suggest the overweening insolence of Cambyses' ambition and the proper end to a sacrilegious plan. It is, in fact, a local variant on the same motive as Xerxes' expedition against Delphi and its destruction. Actually, whether or not Cambyses failed in an attempt to conquer Ammon, it did not remain permanently independent after the Persian conquest of Egypt, and by Darius' reign it, like Cyrene, was included within his sphere of sovereignty.

The enhanced connection between Cyrene and Ammon, first shown in the coinage, received its greatest manifestation in the building of the temple of Zeus at Cyrene. This was a magnificent design, on the same scale as the temple of Zeus at Olympia, which was put up on a hill north-east of the original town on a site that appears not to have been previously occupied by a sanctuary. In earlier times Apollo and Artemis had been the great deities of Cyrene, and the introduction of the worship of Zeus on such a scale has been interpreted as accompanying a change in the state, and so has been connected with the fall of the monarchy (about 450 B.C.). But Chamoux has argued convincingly in detail for a date between 520 and 490 B.C. as more in keeping with the architectural remains. So the temple and the worship of Zeus should be associated with the reign of the re-established monarchy under Battus IV, and the burst of prosperity which appears to have accompanied the inclusion of Cyrene in the perimeter of the Persian empire.

It is evident from the extant coinage of Cyrene and from the literary sources that the Zeus in whose honour the great Doric temple was built about the beginning of the fifth century was the Egyptian Amon with the ram's horns, whom the Cyrenaeans had learnt to know at the oasis of Siwa. Theodorus of Cyrene in Plato's dialogue, *The Statesman*, swears by 'our god Ammon' and when at some uncertain date, probably in the fifth century, the Cyrenaeans wished to put up a dedication at Delphi, it took the form of a figure of Ammon in a chariot.¹⁷ Our literary sources also give us a more obscure piece of evidence on the connections between Cyrene and the oasis. Even in antiquity, when the Alexandrian scholars began to reflect on the course of great events, it had seemed strange to them that a place as isolated as the oracle of Ammon should have received such general notice in the world. So a new and fantastic theory was evolved. Already as early as the time of Aristotle it had been noted that there was geological evidence from the remains of salt deposits and marine fossils that the sea might once have filled the depressions in the deserts of North Africa.¹⁸ Strato, the head of the Peripatetic school in the early third century, then propounded the theory that the oracle of Ammon had once stood on the sea-coast and argued that it was in these circumstances that it had become so well known. For, as he suggested, it was not plausible that its present out-of-the-way

position could have produced its existing distinctive and high reputation. It was typical of Greek bias in favour of the sea that they should think a position on the sea-coast a first requirement for a city of distinction. Eratosthenes, the great Alexandrian geographer, supported this hypothesis with further evidence. He alleged that the native of the oasis could identify some local remains as ship's wreckage and he also called attention to the existence there of figures of dolphins on small columns inscribed with the title of sacred embassies from Cyrene. This last piece of evidence appears to have been used not merely to suggest contact between Cyrene and Ammon, but to argue from the fact that the embassies had set up dolphins as monuments, that they must have come by sea. But the significance of the symbol chosen was not that it was set up at a seaport. Instead the dolphin is known as a type on the early coins of Cyrene and also of her mother-city, Thera.

Strabo, who is the source for our information about this theory, does not make it clear whether this was the reason why Hipparchus, the famous astronomer, rejected, in the second century B.C., the dolphins as evidence. He may simply have treated the monuments as forgeries. But this chief point was the sound enough argument that Cyrene had been founded within historic times, and yet there was no record of Ammon being on the sea-coast. Modern geologists would readily accept the existence of a marine inlet in Pliocene times, but chronologically it could not be connected with the rise to fame of the oracle of Ammon. However, the ancient controversy at least produces a further indication of contact between Cyrene and the oracle. For we need not reject the evidence of the dolphins and their inscription, even if we cannot date it. The fact that they were dedicated by sacred embassies is virtually a proof of consultation of the oracle in archaic periods.

Herodotus also can supply evidence for secular intercourse between the two places in the fifth century. In discussing evidence on the upper course of the Nile he records a story told him by some citizens of Cyrene who said they had been told it by 'Etearchus, the king of the Ammonians'.¹⁹ It is interesting to notice that the sheikh of the oasis had a Greek name: which probably did not mean that he himself was Greek in descent or even in culture, but at least that he had such regular intercourse with Greek visitors that his name was translated into a form pronounceable in Greek.

It is interesting, too, to notice that the story conveys no suggestion that it had to be repeated through interpreters. Quite possibly the king knew Greek or the Cyrenaean visitors had picked up the local language. The fact that Etearchus is described as king is also interesting. We have seen already the evidence from the temple decorations which might suggest that under the last Egyptian Pharaohs the oasis of Siwa had been more independent than parts of Egypt proper. The Persians also may have done little to enforce sovereignty, but anyway at the date when Herodotus heard this story both Cyrene and also Siwa may have been independent of Persian control.

The connection between Cyrene and Ammon is plausible enough and might almost have been assumed even without evidence. Much more remarkable is the spread of the influence of Zeus Ammon to the Greek mainland. Here three directions can be noticed, corresponding to known connections between Cyrene and continental Greece. One of them is essentially literary and is provided by the poet, Pindar.²⁰ In 462 B.C. he was commissioned to produce a choric ode in honour of the victory of King Arcesilas IV of Cyrene in the four-horse chariot race at the Pythian games. Twelve years earlier he had written an ode for a Cyrenaean, Telesicrates, who had won the race in armour at Delphi. But his second Cyrenaean commission was a much more important affair. The brother-in-law of the reigning king had himself been the charioteer in 462 B.C. So instead of merely writing an ode for performance in Greece (as he had done in 474), Pindar was invited to come to Cyrene and superintend in person the production of his poem and music in the native city of the victor. He probably spent the winter of 462/1 B.C. in Cyrene. For besides his original commission he was also given the opportunity to produce his longest and greatest ode—the fourth Pythian—dedicated to the young king, Arcesilas IV. It is a magnificent glorification of the legendary origins of Cyrene, into which Pindar skilfully inserts a plea for the recall of Damophilus, a Cyrenaean exile, whom he had come to know in Greece. In these poems the author shows not only his interest in Cyrenaean politics and society, but also his personal knowledge of the city, as has been well brought out in Chamoux's discussion. One can also suppose that it was then that Pindar became acquainted with the cult of Zeus Ammon. The great temple dedicated to him was probably standing already on its hill,

and Pindar evidently formed the picture that all North Africa was in a special sense under his divine control. In a vivid, if not very accurate, phrase at the beginning of the fourth Pythian he refers to the origins of Cyrene from Thera as 'a root of cities that shall be fostered of men amid the foundations of Zeus Ammon'.

On his return to his native Thebes Pindar proceeded to establish a sanctuary of the new cult. At least Pausanias in his description of the city records a temple of Ammon, with an image dedicated by Pindar and carved by Calamis.²¹ It is reasonable to suppose that this dedication was made after his visit to Cyrene. Who erected the temple, Pausanias does not state. Perhaps it is too much to suppose that Pindar could have had the resources to pay for the whole work. He may have persuaded his native city to erect the building, provided that he supplied the statue. Certainly it is only to be surmised that temple and statue were contemporary. One cannot imagine an empty temple of Zeus Ammon happening to be standing in Thebes during Pindar's lifetime. The mention of Calamis as the sculptor fits plausibly. He was probably a Boeotian by birth, and had just completed his first important commission known to us in 466 B.C. So everything would suit the supposition that the temple and statue were erected soon after Pindar's return to Thebes in 461 B.C.

Pindar also expressed his personal devotion to Zeus Ammon by composing a hymn in his honour, which Pausanias says he sent to the Ammonians. May we suppose that it was written for the dedication ceremony of the image? Pausanias knew of it as inscribed on a triangular *stele* which Ptolemy I had set up as an offering beside the altar of Zeus Ammon in Libya. One line—'O Ammon, lord of Olympus'—no doubt from the opening verse, has been preserved for us elsewhere and demonstrates Pindar's complete identification of Ammon with Zeus.

These instances of his personal devotion to Zeus Ammon may not have been the end of Pindar's influence in this connection. We have already seen that there was evidence to suggest that, even before Herodotus, Pindar might have been the first to mention the legend that represented both Ammon and Dodona as founded from Egyptian Thebes.²² The story probably occurred in his Paean to the Dodonaean Zeus, whose date cannot be established. But it would not be difficult to suppose that he had written it after his visit to Cyrene. Did he come across the legend there, or can he

even have contributed to its creation by his devotion to the Zeus cults of both places? These are unanswerable questions. But at least one can say that Thebes was a city with strong links connecting it with Dodona from primitive times, in which by the middle of the fifth century the cult of the Molossian Zeus could have encountered that of the Zeus of Libya with help from Pindar's influence.

It is worth while at this point to call attention to a bronze head of Zeus Ammon in the Louvre which may be regarded as providing an appropriate illustration of the possible contacts at this period between Ammon and Dodona.²³ The object is some 3 inches high and ends above in a ring. So it must originally have formed part of some larger object of which it was an attached decoration. It was acquired by purchase in the nineteen-twenties, so unfortunately its exact provenance is unproved. But it was believed at that time to be from Dodona, and the probability is strongly reinforced by the smooth green patina which covers the bronze completely. This feature is a notable characteristic of the authentic bronzes from that site.²⁴

The head has the conventional ram's horns which serve to identify the subject. The hair, moustaches and beard are treated quasi-symmetrically and give the face an appearance of the archaic, but a closer examination shows an underlying fluidity in the treatment which points to a date towards the middle of fifth century as the likely period for its making. The technical excellence of the work is first class.

If the connection with Dodona is accepted the reasonable supposition is that it formed part of some dedication which had been specially commissioned for the place. The occurrence of other appropriate subjects, such as Zeus thundering, on votive offerings shows that it was quite usual for a dedication to be designed with an eye to its destination. In this instance the subject was very unfamiliar to contemporary Greek art. The artist executed it with great care and tried to express the dignity of the deity by a rather formal treatment. Whoever gave him the commission must have thought of Zeus Ammon as specially connected with Zeus of Dodona and expressed the idea in striking form. The work was probably produced after Pindar's visit to Cyrene and before Herodotus' visit to Dodona.

If Zeus Ammon owed a debt to Pindar, it may have been repaid

by an obituary legend. In one of the anonymous lives of Pindar it is stated that there was a tale that once upon a time when religious ambassadors were going to the temple of Ammon they prayed for him that as beloved of the god he might have the greatest blessing among men, and he died in the same year. The motive that death was the god's best gift to men is familiar elsewhere in Greek legends.²⁵ In fact the anonymous author of the life refers correctly to the two other well-known examples as analogies. They were connected with Delphi traditionally, and it is interesting to notice that Plutarch tells a variant of the same story about Pindar with the Pythian Apollo substituted for Zeus. Where the story originated it is impossible to decide. Pindar had strong associations with Delphi, which were said to be perpetuated in the ceremonial of the temple. But as we have seen he also had evidently some devotion to the Libyan god, and it is not surprising if in later times each of the great sanctuaries made the most of any connections with the famous poet.

The second direction in which Cyrene had a contact with the mainland was with Sparta. Traditionally, the men of Thera had been derived to some extent from there, and certainly in the late seventh century and the first half of the sixth trade between Sparta and Cyrene was abundant. It is evidenced by the Laconian pottery which was first found at Cyrene in such quantities that it was supposed by the early excavators to be a local product. The famous Arcesilas cup with its comic representation of the monarch overseeing the storing of his wool crop is the best illustration of relations between the two. For it was evidently drawn by a Laconian who had observed such a scene on the spot.

The Spartans had more than a merely commercial interest in North Africa. At the time, in the last quarter of the sixth century, when the manufacture of finely painted pottery had died out in Laconia, a political objective took its place. Dorieus, the half-brother of King Cleomenes, feeling that he had been unjustly thrust out of the succession, proceeded to organize a colony to Libya west of Cyrenaica, with a site at Cinyps in the neighbourhood of the Syrtis as its aim. The endeavour failed after a couple of years through the resistance of the Berber tribesmen inspired by the Carthaginians, and Dorieus instead led an equally unsuccessful venture to Sicily where he met his end.

Two questions could be asked on the subject, both leading to

rather negative results. Was Cyrene associated with Sparta in the venture? There is complete silence in our authorities on this point. Though Doricus touched at Cyrene, his guides were from Thera and no Cyrenaean recruits to the expedition are reported. It has been assumed by some scholars on the basis of the friendly relations between the two states that there must have been some co-operation. But Chamoux has argued strongly that Cyrene, however well disposed to Sparta generally, would never have approved an independent settlement within what she reckoned her sphere of influence.

The venture has left one other trace in our literary tradition in the survival of a number of echoes of what must have been a group of prophecies circulated to support the expedition.²⁶ These are particularly interesting because Herodotus takes care to stress that Doricus before his first expedition had failed to take the usual step of consulting the Delphic oracle and implies that his failure could be put down to some extent to that omission. He consulted it before setting out for Sicily, and his disastrous end there called for a careful justification on the part of the priestly authorities. But it is evident that if he did not consult Delphi before setting out for Cinyps, he did not consult Ammon either, or it is most unlikely that its failure would not have been reported. So we can probably suppose that the prophecies which have come down to us unattributed to any oracle-centre were produced for him by some private soothsayer. The expedition must probably be dated as falling in a period before Sparta had direct contact with Ammon.

At some uncertain period later, however, this position was changed. Laconia was one of the few districts on the Greek mainland to contain temples to Zeus Ammon. One was in Sparta, another in Gythceion, and Pausanias in recording the former remarks 'The Spartans appear originally, most of all the Greeks, to have consulted the oracle in Libya'.²⁷ Unfortunately he does not tell us anything to date the foundation of either temple, and the earliest example which he gives of a Spartan consultation is that of Lysander, on a personal visit in 402 B.C. But the history of Lysander itself supplies evidence for an earlier connection. For Lysander had a brother, named Libys ('Libyan') and this highly unusual personal name was explained by the fact that the king of the Ammonites was a hereditary friend of the family of Lysander, and his brother had been named 'Libyan' in consequence of this

connection. The dates of birth of Lysander or his brother can only be surmised, but are not likely to fall much later than 440 B.C. So the family connection between these Spartans and the oasis of Zeus Ammon must go back to the mid-fifth century at least and quite possibly a generation or more earlier. This points to another link between Zeus Ammon and the Greek mainland at about the same date as Pindar's association.

The other part of the Peloponnese, besides Sparta, where official worship was paid to Ammon was at Olympia. As Pausanias in his description of Olympia records, the Eleans made offerings not only to Hellenic gods, but also to Ammon, Hera Ammonia and Parammon.²⁸ The name of this last deity, as he explained, was a title of Hermes, meaning apparently 'the associate of Ammon'. Pausanias goes on to describe how the Eleans had consulted the oracle in Libya from the earliest times, as was shown by altars in the sanctuary of Ammon dedicated by the Eleans. These were inscribed with the enquiries which they had made and the replies which they had received together with the names of the men who had gone on the embassies from Elis to Ammon. As is clearly shown elsewhere in his work Pausanias had actually visited the oasis of Siwa and he can be taken as an eye-witness to these inscribed records. It is unfortunate that in his brief notice he does not spare more space for details about these enquiries. Even if the earliest instances were possibly legendary, they clearly prove that Olympia and Ammon must have established their mutual relations on a firm basis over some considerable period of time.

The deities whom the Eleans worshipped raise another interesting point. They are evidently a triad of father, mother and somewhat subordinate son. As we have seen already, at Egyptian Thebes Amon was worshipped as the dominant member of a triad consisting of himself, his wife, Mut, and his son, Chunsu. We have apparently no independent evidence that at Ammon the male god had these associates, but our sources are comparatively few, and concentrate on the chief deity. It is very likely that actually there too he had similar partners to those at Egyptian Thebes, though perhaps less prominently. In any case the worship of a triad of this kind is not at all typical of Greek religion, and the most likely explanation is that the whole notion was imported direct from Siwa. This would be another indication of the close and intimate contact between the two shrines that instead of merely worshipping

Zeus alone he was given his proper associated deities. Pausanias assigns no date for the foundation of the cult at Olympia, and in this developed form it may be no earlier than the Hellenistic period. But as Chamoux has shown, there are very plausible grounds for identifying a beardless young male head with ram's horns on the coins of Cyrene as a representation of Hermes Parammon. In some examples he wears the band with a frontal ornament which is elsewhere found on the head of Hermes. Since the type occurs in the coinage from the end of the fifth century, it may be taken as evidence that the cult of Parammon had been adopted in Cyrene at least by that date, and, if so, might also have reached Olympia.

Pausanias also mentions a rather tall story connecting the oracle of Ammon and Olympia.²⁹ Victors in the games had the right to dedicate statues of themselves in the Altis. One of these which Pausanias saw was the monument of Eubotas of Cyrene, a famous athlete, who won the foot race in 408 B.C. He had consulted Ammon in advance and had received a prophecy of victory; so he arrived at Olympia accompanied by a bronze statue of himself which was dedicated on the same day that he won the race. One cannot tell whether to discount this as one of the inventions of the professional guides or believe that, though mildly improbable, it may actually have taken place.

The third direction in which Cyrene would be likely to have transmitted a knowledge of Zeus Ammon to the Greek mainland would be by way of Athens. When the Laconian trade in pottery to North Africa had lapsed about the mid-sixth century, its place was taken by trade with Athens. Athenian pottery was imported and the marble statuary often found at Cyrene shows evident signs of influence from Athenian marble carving. Athens in its turn probably benefited from the importation of corn from North Africa and may have acted as a distributing centre for that rare Cyrenaean commodity, silphium. Anyway Cyrene was known as an oracle-centre to the Attic writers of the last third of the fifth century. The first extant to mention it is Euripides who makes the Chorus in the *Alcestis* lament that there is no place to which one can send on a voyage to rescue the life of one doomed to die: neither Lycia nor the waterless land of the sons of Ammon will avail.³⁰ The choice of place-names is evidently determined by the wish to find distant oracle-centres, where remedies might be sought.

So Apollo at Patara and Zeus in Libya are the distant sanctuaries described. Elsewhere Euripides once names Ammon as a region which knows no rain from Zeus, but without implying any prophetic activity there. Aristophanes, as we have seen, twice names Ammon in the *Birds* as a possible oracle mentioned in conjunction with Delphi. It would be impossible from these references to form any real estimate as to what extent Athenians consulted Zeus Ammon in the later fifth century. But the evidence confirms what we have seen from Thebes and Sparta, that in that period through the connection with Cyrene the Libyan cult and its oracle were becoming known on the Greek mainland. This makes plausible the appearance of Ammon as the subject of an independent work in Greek literature. Athenaeus in a single quotation cites on the subject of the date-palm 'Hellanicus in the *Journey from the coast to the sanctuary of Ammon*, if the work is genuine'.³¹ Among Hellanicus' many publications are known a work on Egyptian history and geography. So this might have been a section of it, or an independent work on a related subject. What is implied in Athenaeus' doubts on its authenticity? He may have meant that it was written by an unknown contemporary of Hellanicus, but wrongly attributed to him, or he may have regarded it as a later forgery. Jacoby, however, is right in arguing that there is nothing inherently improbable in a work on this subject in the last quarter of the fifth century B.C.

If we turn to look at the literary evidence for particular consultations of the oracle of Zeus Ammon, two instances stand rather apart, as in them Greek tradition claims to record enquiries made by Africans. One story is preserved in Polyaeus, telling how Psammetichus, the founder of the Saite Dynasty, 'overthrew Tementes the king of Egypt'.³² The god Ammon when Tementes enquired about his kingship replied by an oracle that he should be on his guard against cocks. Psammetichus having with him Pigres the Carian when he learnt from him that the Carians were the first to put crests on helmets understood the prophecy and raised many Carian mercenaries'. This legend in this form does not appear in Herodotus, but is probably pre-Alexandrian in origin. It is in fact curiously parallel to the legend which Herodotus himself tells about the rise of Psammetichus to power.³³ There he receives an oracle from the temple of Leto at Buto (the temple of that goddess in the Sebennyitic nome) that he will have vengeance

on his enemies when brazen men appear from the sea. This is fulfilled when Ionians and Carians in hoplite armour land in Egypt. In each instance we have the same pattern that the unfamiliar appearance of hoplite armour is ambiguously expressed in the original oracle in a way not at first recognized. This is a very usual form of Greek legend, and is entirely unsuitable to the methods of Egyptian divination which would not produce verbal equivocations of this sort. No doubt both versions were invented in Greek circles after the rise of Psammetichus so as to describe metaphorically his dependence on foreign mercenaries. One feature in Polyaeus' story is plausible enough: Pigres was a correct Carian name. On the other hand his Tementhes, king of Egypt, though his name can be interpreted as Egyptian, seems to have less historical basis than Herodotus' picture of eleven local kings whom Psammetichus overcame. Neither author really recognizes that Psammetichus was rebelling against an Assyrian overlordship.

The other native consultation of the oracle is reported by Herodotus. He is discussing the question of the limits of Egypt and cites the oracle of Ammon as supporting views which he had himself formed independently.³⁴ As he explains, 'those who inhabit the parts of Egypt bordering on Libya from the town of Marea and Apis, thinking themselves to be Libyans and not Egyptians and vexed with the religious observances, as they did not want to abstain from cow's flesh, sent to Ammon saying that they and the Egyptians had nothing in common. For, they argued, they dwelt outside the Delta and did not agree with the Egyptian beliefs, but wished to be allowed to eat anything. But the god would not let them do this, for he said that Egypt was all that the Nile irrigated when it rose, and they were Egyptians who dwelt below the town of Elephantine and drank from the river. Such was the response given them.' Here, unlike the previous instance we have a plausible enough picture of a ritual enquiry which would both fall within the sphere of Ammon's interest and also is answered in a way not inconsistent with Egyptian divination. I presume the enquiry was in the form 'is it lawful for us to eat cow's flesh?', and the oracular indication was negative. The further explanation then was presumably added verbally by the priests. Herodotus implies that he was told the story in Egypt after he had already formed theories about the natural boundary of the country. Except that the

oracular enquiry preceded his visit he gives no chronological indication. Modern scholars have tried to read more into the story and have supposed that the occasion was when Inaros the Libyan in 461 B.C. led his insurrection against Persian rule. On this supposition Libyan sympathizers who wished, however, to be sure that they would not come under the rules of the Egyptian official cults had tried unsuccessfully to win the support of Ammon for their right to remain independent in this respect. It is an ingenious, but unnecessary, hypothesis, since clearly a ritual enquiry of this sort might arise at any time quite unconnected with political circumstances. However, Herodotus' story, whatever its precise context, is at least historically plausible.

When we turn to stories of Greek enquiries it is not surprising that the chief examples concern the Athenians and the Spartans—the two states which we have already seen had close relations with Cyrene and Ammon. The earliest Athenian enquiry recorded is attributed to Cimon in 451 at the time of his last expedition to Cyprus.³⁵ 'He sent to the oracle of Ammon men to make a secret enquiry from the god. For no one knows the subject on which they were sent, and the god himself did not produce an oracle for them, but as soon as they entered he bade the sacred embassy depart. "For", he said "Cimon himself was already with him." The ambassadors when they heard this went down again to the sea and when they reached the Greek camp which was at that time in Egypt, they heard that Cimon was dead, and when they reckoned back the days to their visit to the oracle they recognized that it was Cimon's death which was enigmatically expressed in the saying that he was already with the gods.' Like so much in Plutarch's *Lives*, it makes a good story, but it is hard to believe that it is founded on fact further than that one can suppose that Cimon may have tried to consult Zeus Ammon. As Thucydides shows, Cimon had detached a contingent from his Cyprian expedition and sent it to Egypt to aid insurgents against Persia.³⁶ This would be just the point at which also to try to get oracular support from Ammon, and he may have made the attempt. But his premature death led to the immediate suspension of further Athenian operations against Persia. In these circumstances it would not be surprising if the recollection of this abortive approach to the oracle was worked up instead into the legend as we now have it. It was a stock motive in these Greek tales of oracular consultation that the

prophet should anticipate the enquiry by some appropriate address to the consultant.³⁷

A favourite subject for legends, as we have seen, was the Sicilian expedition and its disastrous end. Athens at the time was not in very good relations with Delphi: which may be the reason why tradition represents not only the Pythian Apollo as consulted, but also Dodona and Ammon. The story with regard to the latter told how the sacred embassy returned from Africa with a prophecy for Alcibiades that the Athenians would capture all the Syracusans.³⁸ The fulfilment was later provided in a manner typical of Greek legend. The Athenians at an early stage of the campaign in a raid on the Great Harbour at Syracuse captured an enemy ship which was laden with boards containing the list of the citizens of Syracuse written out tribe by tribe. (The ship had been transporting these records from the Olympium to the city.) The prophets, when this prize was brought in, were distressed because they saw in it the fulfilment of the oracle. The Athenian expedition had captured all the Syracusans.

It is difficult to decide whether there was any basis of fact behind this story. Thucydides reports the raid on the Great Harbour, but does not mention the capture of any enemy ships.³⁹ He was not greatly interested in oracles as such, only as illustrations of human behaviour. So he might have omitted the entire episode. But on the whole it is more likely that it has been foisted on our tradition by someone who wished to satisfy the natural Greek supposition that the Athenians would never have undertaken such a hazardous expedition without good assurances of success and that also these assurances must have been delusory. We may notice how Thucydides reports that after the news of the disaster reached Athens the people 'became angry also not only with politicians but also with the oracle-mongers and prophets and all those who at the time had, by various methods of divination, encouraged them to believe that they would conquer Sicily'. It will have been then that the process of concocting fulfilments for alleged prophecies started. It is interesting to notice that in this instance the process persisted for a century afterwards, since Plutarch records that others, who were evidently not content with the alleged fulfilment by the capture of the Syracusan citizen roll, saw the true accomplishment of the oracle in the occasion when Callippus the Athenian assassinated Dion and for a short while made himself

master of Syracuse in 354 B.C. It is remarkable that this link between an alleged prophecy of 415 B.C. and an event of the mid-fourth century was ever created. The indication seems to be that the alleged prophecy and the story of its fulfilment by the capture of the citizenship list were all current before Callippus' coup.

If we return to the original consultation at the time of the Sicilian expedition, it is at least possible and even probable that some enquiry was sent to Ammon at the time. The contemporary references in Aristophanes show that to an Athenian audience this oracle was familiar at this very period as a possible place for enquiry.⁴⁰ Also Alcibiades and the more ambitious planners of the Sicilian expedition were prepared to look ahead to the capture not merely of Syracuse, but also of Carthage. It may have seemed specially appropriate then to seek oracular support from Africa, and it is in accord with this interpretation that we find that Plutarch describes the sacred embassy as bringing the answer to Alcibiades. It is, of course, unlikely that Zeus had given a response which was so conveniently designed for equivocal fulfilment. He probably had done no more than express divine approval. Whether in so doing the priests of Zeus Ammon were really taking up a conscious attitude to the political questions of Greece is uncertain. They may merely have shown their friendly appreciation of Athenian recognition. Cyrene certainly at a later stage in the operations was prepared to help the Spartan reinforcements trying to reach Syracuse.⁴¹ But we need not credit Ammon with always taking the same line as Cyrene.

In the fourth century official recognition by Athens of the cult of Zeus Ammon is established on a more solid basis. In the mid-seventies at latest the treasury of Athena contained a 'silver bowl of Ammon'⁴² and in 363 a decree was proposed ordering a list to be made of various offerings on behalf of the Athenian people beginning with six to Zeus Ammon. As Woodward has pointed out, this may show that his shrine was already established in the Piraeus.⁴³ The name of the proposer of the decree can be restored as Cratinus, and Alphonse Dain who edited the inscription has identified him with the Cratinus who in the same year proposed an elaborate decree conferring the remarkable privilege of Athenian citizenship on a Delphian named Astyocrates who had been exiled from his native city together with ten other Delphians who received lesser honours. Dain has suggested that these activities of

Cratinus were part of a single policy. Athens found herself in hostility with the ruling faction of Delphi, and at the same time turned to cultivate Zeus Ammon as an alternative source of prophecy. This hypothesis must remain rather tenuous so far as this particular instance is concerned. Georg Daux has warned us that 'Athens has never boycotted the oracle of the Pythian Apollo'.⁴⁴ But it is also true that in the disturbed period of the fourth century when Athens needed oracular guidance Delphi was often in the control of parties from whom she was politically estranged. It was rare for an Athenian statesman to take the extreme line attributed to Demosthenes of saying that 'the Pythia has joined the side of Philip', but also Athens found it evidently convenient to maintain firm relations with both Ammon and Dodona who could at times provide preferable alternatives for consultation. Sterling Dow has called attention to the fact that Ammon was established in Attica earlier than any other Egyptian god, and has offered what is no doubt the right explanation: 'he had an oracle and he had Greek intermediaries'.

How early and how often the Athenian state had made a practice of consulting the oracle can be vaguely surmised from some evidence which Woodward has recently produced by reinterpreting a very fragmentary Attic inscription.⁴⁵ This can be shown to contain a list of dedications in Athens made in the name of several different parties of sacred ambassadors 'who had brought the gold to Ammon'. They appear to have made this pilgrimage at various times in the period before 360 B.C. and presumably both brought this precious offering from the Athenian state and also made enquiries on its behalf.

The climax of this recognition of Zeus Ammon by Athens was the creation of a sacred trireme in honour of the god. Since at least the beginning of the fifth century Athens had always had two sacred triremes in use: the Paralos and the Salaminia. Their special function was to be sent on religious missions, such as the annual festival at Delos commemorating the return of Theseus from Crete. In the latter part of the fourth century the name Salaminia was discontinued and in its place the second of the two sacred triremes was called Ammonias or the ship of Ammon. Unfortunately we have no clear indications of the date and circumstances in which this remarkable innovation was made. Aristotle in the *Constitution of Athens* already recognized the change

of name, and the treatise contains a reference to the year 329/8 and probably took its final form not much later.⁴⁶ Again Dinarchus in a lost speech, probably to be dated to 324 B.C., referred to the trireme as the Ammonis. So a *terminus ante quem* for its establishment falls soon after 330 B.C. This has not unnaturally suggested to some scholars that the ship was re-named in connection with Alexander's famous visit to Ammon in 331 B.C. which we must discuss later. But actually at this period Alexander was not at all popular in Athens, and it may well be doubted whether the Athenians are likely to have taken such a step to please him. In fact it is quite possible that the change of name had occurred some time before and that it is simply the lack of evidence which prevents us from dating the event in the 'thirties or 'forties of the century. For instance the first month of the year 333/2 was marked by a sacrifice offered by the *Strategoï* to Ammon.⁴⁷ It appears in the sacrificial accounts for that year, but does not recur in subsequent years. Foucart originally called attention to this unique ceremony and suggested that it was the occasion of the dedication of a temple to Ammon mentioned in another Attic inscription later in the same year. But the temple is that in the Piraeus which as we have seen had probably been established earlier in the century. It is therefore at least possible that the special event in midsummer 333 was the dedication of the Ammonias. In any case its name implied that Athens reckoned that one of the regular duties of a sacred trireme was to take religious embassies to Africa in order to visit the shrine of Zeus Ammon. So though no precise records of these visits or of enquiries at the oracle are preserved, it must be assumed that some at least occurred, as they appear to have done since early in the fourth century.

If we turn from Athens to her rival Sparta, we have noted already that the Spartans had the reputation of great devotion to Zeus Ammon, but our only literary records of enquiries are connected with one individual—Lysander. As we saw, he had a family association with Africa as evidenced by his brother's name Libys,⁴⁸ and Zeus Ammon twice occurs in his life story in rather divergent versions. In 404/3 while after the fall of Athens Lysander was mopping up stray pockets of resistance in the north Aegean, he was besieging Aphytis in Pallene, when Zeus Ammon appeared to him by night, and told him that it would be better for him and for the Spartans if they gave up their campaign. So on the god's

orders he abandoned the siege and bade the men of Aphytis offer a sacrifice to him.⁴⁹ The story might be disregarded as an unconvincing legend if it were not for the curious material confirmation provided by the head of Zeus Ammon which appears on the coinage of Aphytis. Our literary sources leave it vague whether the cult there had predated Lysander's expedition. Plutarch's statement that Lysander bade them sacrifice to him would not preclude the possibility of previous local worship. Pausanias makes the general remark: 'The men of Aphytis honour Ammon no less than the Ammonians of Libya do.' But again he does not indicate whether this was only true after their deliverance from the Spartans. The coinage does nothing to prove a previous devotion, for the earliest bronze issue which shows the head of Zeus Ammon in three-quarter face was probably struck between 400 and 358 B.C.⁵⁰ Though Aphytis is a curiously out-of-the-way place for the cult to have become established in, it should perhaps be compared with Cyzicus, Lampsacus, Mitylene and Melos, all of which put the head of the same deity on their coins in late fifth-century issues. The diffusion of the cult may correspond to some trade-routes from Egypt to the Thraceward regions. Also the worship of Ammon may not have come direct from Libya, but via Naucratis where he was worshipped by the Greek colonists. Hence it is possible to suppose that when Lysander besieged Aphytis it already contained a local cult of the god, but more likely that it was established after the siege. It may be genuinely true that Lysander, who had already a family tradition of veneration for the deity was subconsciously moved to abandon the siege. Like Sulla, with whom Plutarch compares him, Lysander may have combined a cynical rationalism with occasional fits of superstition. Anyway our literary authorities tell the story for the sake of its consequence. Not merely did Lysander bid the men of Aphytis sacrifice to Zeus Ammon, but also he resolved himself to make a pilgrimage to appease the angry god.

This was the explanation which one of our ancient sources gave for the fact that in the year 403/2 Lysander left Sparta and went to Libya.⁵¹ But the more usual view in our authorities is that the pilgrimage was only nominally undertaken for religious reasons. Lysander's real motive was the need to withdraw from Spartan politics. His ever-growing prestige, following on the defeat of Athens, and his evident ambition had at last driven the Spartan

kings to unite against him. Previously, Agis and Pausanias had as usual been at variance, but in the late summer of 403 B.C. they combined to prevent Lysander from establishing a further dominance throughout the former Athenian empire by means of his decarchies. This in itself provided an adequate motive for Lysander's wish to retire abroad for a while, and as a Spartan he could only justify his absence by a religious pretext.

But Ephorus, the late fourth-century historian, knew a tradition which read even more into the expedition.⁵² According to him Lysander had resolved to overthrow the Spartan constitution and make the kingship open to all Spartiates in the confident hope that he would be chosen. For this purpose he needed oracular authority, and according to Ephorus he first tried unsuccessfully to bribe the Pythia and again attempted to win over the priestesses of Dodona without avail. So as a last resort he journeyed to Ammon and offered the prophets there a large sum of money. They were indignant at the proposal and sent to Sparta to accuse Lysander of this crime. But he was tried and acquitted to the disgust of the Libyans, whose comment was 'We will give better judgement when you come to dwell in Libya', alluding to the old prophecy that the Spartans would one day found a colony there.

It is an effective, but not very convincing story. No doubt Lysander did visit the sanctuary of Zeus Ammon and if he could have obtained any useful oracular support from the god he would not have been above using it. But it is very questionable whether he really attempted to work the oracle on such a grand scale at Delphi, Dodona and Ammon. It is more likely that the whole narrative has been developed from the hostile gossip about Lysander put out after his death particularly by his political opponents among the Spartans.

These few examples of Athenian and Spartan consultation of Ammon may be rounded off by a moralizing tale which occurs in the pseudo-Platonic dialogue, *Alcibiades II*.⁵³ There Socrates is represented as saying: 'I heard once from some people that when the Athenians and Spartans had quarrelled it happened to our city that by land and by sea whenever a battle took place they were unlucky and never could conquer. So the Athenians were vexed at the situation and were in doubt how to find a cure for their present troubles. When they had taken counsel they decided that the best course was to send to Ammon and enquire. Among other

questions they asked why the gods preferred to give the victory to the Spartans rather than to themselves, though they, as they said, brought the finest and greatest number of sacrifices of all the Greeks, and had adorned the temples of the gods with dedications such as no other Greeks had given, and had sent the most expensive and solemn processions to the gods each year, and had paid as much money as all the rest of the Greeks put together. But the Spartans never cared a jot for any of these things and were so heedlessly disposed towards the gods that they often sacrificed blemished victims and in other respects were much inferior to the Athenians in their worship though they had no less capital than Athens. When they had made this speech and enquired what they should do to find a remedy of their present troubles, the prophet gave no other answer—for the god clearly did not allow him, but calling him said “Thus saith Ammon to the Athenians. He would prefer to have the well-omened words of the Spartans rather than all the offerings of the Greeks taken together”.’ Socrates explained the ‘well-omened words’ of the Spartans by reference to their custom in their prayers of simply asking the gods for ‘fair blessings in addition to good blessings’ and nothing else.

The myth is a moralizing invention of the sort often associated with the Delphic oracle. From the way in which he introduces it, it would appear that the author of the *Alcibiades II* had not himself imagined it, but rather was reproducing some already known story. Historically it is given no real dating, and it must not be treated in that context, but rather as an example of the use of Zeus Ammon as a convenient peg on which to hang a moralization as a deity whom both the Athenians and the Spartans venerated.

The author of the *Second Alcibiades* dialogue was probably not Plato, but some late fourth-century writer. However, Plato himself recognized Ammon as a mouthpiece of divine authority. In the *Laws* when picturing the religious establishment of his ideal state he lays down the principle that no worship of deities or sacrifices are to be changed which have been set up by the instructions of Delphi, Dodona and Ammon.⁵⁴ This illustrates again how by the mid-fourth century the Libyan oracle had joined the two in mainland Greece as the major religious authorities.

The greatest event in the history of the oracle was when it was visited by Alexander early in 331 B.C.⁵⁵ After his magnificent victory of Issus Alexander, instead of continuing a direct invasion

of Persia, proceeded to capture the remaining coasts of the east Mediterranean. He marched into Egypt as a liberator come to free the country from the Persian yoke. Here for the first time he found himself in control of an ancient oriental people with strong national feelings expressed in their religion, and here he inaugurated his policy of accepting the native form of kingship and complying with the local cult. The Greek historians, who were not greatly interested in this aspect, did not record any official enthronement as Pharaoh.⁵⁶ But probably the ceremony did take place. In any case Alexander is recorded in hieroglyphs with the proper Egyptian titles — 'he who has laid hands on the lands of the foreigners' (a description apparently coined specially for him) and 'beloved of Ammon and selected of Ra' and 'son of Ra' (the traditional royal epithets).

When he had superintended the founding of Alexandria at the western extremity of the Delta, he proceeded to lead an expedition to the oasis of Siwa. His purpose is agreed by ancient authorities to have been to consult the oracle, but they begin to differ on the problem that he wanted to ask. Callisthenes, the earliest source, appears to have given no indication of the subject. In this he may have followed Alexander's own intention of treating the matter as confidential. Instead he referred to the reputation of Ammon for veracity and to the king's wish to do the same as Perseus and Heracles who also traditionally had visited the oracle and to both of whom he was connected in descent.⁵⁷ Later sources stressed the personal wish of Alexander, that impulsive longing (*pothos*) which appears elsewhere too in descriptions of his behaviour. But they also sometimes introduce a particular subject of enquiry, that he wished to ask about his own ancestry.⁵⁸ This turns on the legend that he was not the son of Philip, but of Ammon himself. It has been the great achievement of Ulrich Wilcken to have maintained against other theories the view that this is to reverse the true order of events. The legend of Alexander's birth from Ammon arose as a consequence of the king's visit to the oracle and the reception given him there. It was not his motive in advance to lay claim to divine parentage. This is best demonstrated by the fact that after the consultation he made no immediate use of those features of the visit which supported this claim.

Curtius Rufus substitutes for this motive the purpose that he did not wish to depart from the ancestral customs of the Egyptians.⁵⁹ This is in itself more reasonable, but is based on a mistaken

supposition. There was no Egyptian custom that the Pharaoh should consult the oracle at Siwa. The journey itself was a difficult one, first along the coast to Paraetonium (Mersa Matruh), then south-west across the waterless desert for two hundred miles. The hazards of the route were eased on this occasion by fortunate accidents, which in these circumstances took on a deeply ominous character in Callisthenes' narrative. A timely shower of rain helped to replenish their water supplies and towards the end of the journey two ravens (which Ptolemy's later account converted into two snakes)⁶⁰ appeared to guide them.

The arrival at the temple of Ammon was a great moment for Alexander, but also as Wilcken has emphasized it must have been a most remarkable event for the priests. So far as we know, no Pharaoh had ever visited the oasis. So, Alexander's arrival rightly called for a very special reception. At the entrance of the temple, the chief priest addressed him as 'son of Zeus'.⁶¹ In doing so he was probably doing no more than greet Alexander formally with his official titles as Pharaoh. In fact it is likely enough that in Memphis or elsewhere in Egypt Alexander had been similarly received. But this occasion would in two ways seem different to the king and his companions. While the Egyptian priests would have spoken in their native language, our ancient authorities indicate that the priest of Ammon spoke Greek. This is not unlikely, since by this time it must have been a regular enough proceeding for sacred embassies from Athens or elsewhere in Greece to approach the oracle. (We have seen how it is even possible to guess from a passage in Herodotus that the sheikh of the oasis had already used Greek in the mid-fifth century.) The effect must have been much more powerful than any ritual reception at an Egyptian temple, where the unintelligible formulae may have been summarily translated afterwards by an interpreter. Also the temple of Ammon itself must have been much more significant. Amon-Ra of Thebes was identified with Zeus by Greek authors such as Herodotus, but no Greek states or individuals had ever made a pilgrimage to his temple to consult the oracle as expressing the will of the king of the gods. The sanctuary of Ammon, in contrast, was recognized throughout the Greek world as one of the chief mouthpieces of divine judgement.

Our earliest account of the scene, written by Callisthenes, who was probably present, and published within a couple of years of the

event, is represented by a paraphrase in Strabo, who regarded the description as too influenced by flattery. Besides the address to Alexander as son of Zeus, the other facts recorded are that 'the priest permitted the king alone to pass into the temple in his usual dress, but the rest changed their clothes. Also all heard the divine response outside except Alexander, who heard it inside. The oracular responses were not, as at Delphi and Branchidae, given in words, but mostly by nods and tokens as in Homer, "the son of Cronos spoke and nodded assent with his dark brows"—the prophet acting as interpreter for Zeus'. Evidently the priest after addressing Alexander led him into the temple where he alone of the enquirers remained, while the rest waited outside for the answers of the oracle. The brief allusions to 'nods' and 'tokens' can be taken to refer to the same method of enquiry described by our later authorities. As we have already seen, they mention in connection with Alexander's visit the image of the god carried on a golden boat by eighty priests.⁶² The same term 'nod' is used there of the divine impulse guiding the direction of the image, and the priests who carry it are said to 'be moved in established tokens of the voice': otherwise, in regular movements which were interpreted as words from the god. The priest himself acted as interpreter, and apparently carried the message in reply to Alexander's enquiry into the sanctuary where the king awaited it. For the others he announced it in front of the temple, where presumably the image of the god was being put through its symbolic motions. Since this involved the use of eighty bearers and an indefinite company of singing attendants it could not take place inside either of the two rooms of the temple, but outside it in some forecourt or open space. Also the address to Alexander as son of Zeus was evidently quite distinct from the answer of the oracle, for it was spoken to him openly by the priest, while the response was conveyed to him in private.

Clearly in all this procedure Alexander's visit to the oracle was no ordinary consultation, but was conducted on special lines appropriate to the importance of the event. The reception of a Pharaoh had to be combined with an oracular consultation by him and by others. The method of eliciting the god's answer was of the usual Egyptian type which, as Černý remarks,⁶³ only took place when the god made a public appearance in procession, but the Pharaoh as a god and the son of a god would have access to

the private home of Ammon, his inner sanctuary, where he received the god's answer. The unfortunate result of this combination of ceremonial is that it is somewhat difficult to relate the procedure as described by our ancient sources to the pattern of a typical enquiry, and also it is likely that starting from the earliest published narrative, that of Callisthenes, the story tended to be told so as to convey some special interpretation of the great happening, according to each author's purpose. The usual tendency was to incorporate the statement that Alexander was the son of Zeus into a dialogue with the priest so as to make it in effect an oracular answer. For instance Alexander is made to enquire whether he has dealt with all the murderers of his father, and the priest is horrified at the impious remark and replies that Alexander's father is not mortal. Again the king is represented as asking whether he will rule the world and is told that Ammon agrees to this wish. These amplifications of the enquiry are typical products of the vulgate tradition which tended to stress Alexander's supernatural origin and his early ambitions for world rule. In the opposite direction is the tendency which tried to explain away the priest's address. According to this version it was a mere slip of the tongue whereby the faulty Greek of the Libyan had converted a simple greeting as 'dear son' into 'son of Zeus'. Alexander, it was suggested, had unscrupulously seized on this error, and spread it abroad as a deliberate oracle.⁶⁴

We need not doubt that those modern scholars are right who distinguish between the address of the priest, and Alexander's enquiry and the oracle's reply. The address had greeted him spontaneously as son of Zeus in accordance with Pharaonic tradition. But what was his enquiry and what answer did he get? Here our best sources are markedly reticent. Callisthenes appears deliberately to have given no indication, which was probably Alexander's own wish. Instead his emphatic mention of the priest's address led to it being taken as the oracle. Arrian, probably representing Aristobulus, confines himself to recording that 'when he had heard all that was to his desire, as he said, he set off again towards Egypt'. This indicates at least that, as one might expect, Ammon had given an answer which the king took as favourable. Plutarch refers to a letter of Alexander to his mother Olympias in which he said that he had received some secret oracles which on his return he would reveal to her alone.⁶⁵ If this can be taken as authentic,

presumably, as Tarn suggests, the secret died with him. For he never returned to Macedon. But the letters attributed to Alexander are notoriously suspicious. In this instance, if a forgery, its wording was discreet. But it seems to contain at least a hint of the fabulous story that Ammon had privily begotten Alexander with Olympias. If so, it must be classed as spurious. If it is to be accepted as authentic, it seems to me that it will have to be supposed, with Tarn, that the high priest in the sanctuary had expounded to Alexander the mystic theology of the divine and human birth of the Pharaohs, and that Alexander took this as an oracle of Zeus and regarded it as too sacred for any ear but his mother's. This theory, while possible, seems to me too unlikely.

On the other hand Tarn, while noting the fact, has not stressed enough the passages in Arrian which refer to sacrifices which Alexander made on the instructions of Ammon. These all occur in the farthest stages of Alexander's marches. For on an island at the mouth of the Indus, just before sending out Nearchus' naval expedition he 'sacrificed to the gods to whom he said that he had been instructed by Ammon to sacrifice, and on the following day he sailed down river to the other island in the sea and put in to it and there too he sacrificed other sacrifices to other gods and in another fashion; and these he said he was offering in accordance with an oracular instruction of Ammon'.⁶⁶ So far as we know Alexander had not made any later enquiry at Ammon by ambassadors. So it would appear that in 325 at the Indus' mouth he was carrying out ritual instruction given him at Siwa in 331 B.C. The implication is that part of his enquiry at the oracle of Ammon had been in the traditional form: 'To what gods and heroes am I to make offerings so as to fare well', or perhaps, 'so as to obtain what I have in mind'. One may reasonably suppose that the oracle would have no difficulty in replying to this kind of question. We are not told that the sacrifices included an offering to Ammon. It may have been the same group of deities at the Indus' mouth as those to whom he sacrificed at the start of the voyage down river. They are described at 'the gods who were ancestral to him or indicated by oracle as well as Poseidon, Amphitrite, the Nereids and Ocean himself' and the three rivers, Hydaspes, Acesines and Indus.⁶⁷ Here again the precise deities who were included in the oracular instructions are not recorded, but it is implied that Poseidon and the other sea and river deities belong to a separate

category. To Ammon he is only once explicitly recorded as making an offering: a libation poured from the prow of his ship on the same occasion. Then there were grouped together 'Heracles his distant ancestor and Ammon and the other gods to whom he was accustomed to make offering'.⁶⁸ Tarn was so struck by the rarity of the occurrence of Ammon's name in the references to Alexander's worship that he wanted even to remove it from this context. But actually, though Alexander was always ready to employ the traditional methods of religion, these details are usually left out of our sources, so that it is useless to try to prove whether he made offerings often or rarely to Ammon.

Evidently, however, on at least two occasions in India, if not elsewhere, Alexander told his comrades that the sacrifices which he was offering were on the instructions of the oracle of Ammon. It would not be reasonable to argue that the only question he had asked or the only answer which he had received was the one which these sacrifices indicate. He might most naturally have preceded his question about the deities to whom he should sacrifice by a question about achieving his object. The form would then have been: 'shall I succeed in such and such a purpose, and to what deities should I sacrifice that it may turn out best?' This still leaves us uncertain what was the project which Alexander laid before Ammon. He might, of course, have left it unexpressed and simply enquired about what he had in mind.

If we suppose that Alexander expressed the subject of his enquiry and accept the view that he did not ask about his parentage, all probability points to the supposition that he enquired about the future success of his campaign against Persia. Wilcken, feeling that he must explain what he regarded as the king's intense unwillingness to reveal the oracle conjectured that it was because he had asked Zeus for world dominion.⁶⁹ But one may doubt whether this hypothesis is necessary. If, unlike Wilcken, one does not accept as genuine the alleged letter to Olympias, there is no need to regard Alexander's silence on the subject of the oracle as specially intense. If he had asked for the conquest of Persia, it would be reasonable enough for him to be unwilling at this stage to disclose that that was his military objective. We are not forced to suppose that at this stage he had already set his heart on world dominion, if indeed he ever did.

Whether Alexander had actually expressed his military objective

to the oracle or whether he simply asked for the god's approval of what he had in mind, he evidently received an affirmative answer and was able to announce himself fully satisfied. At the time the response of the oracle was overshadowed by the public address to him as 'son of Zeus' and this, as we have seen, was the aspect stressed when Callisthenes, still writing as Alexander's official historian, recorded the visit to Ammon. Alexander himself some six and a half years later when turning back from his furthest conquests reverted to the occasion, and offered sacrifices which he said had been enjoined by the oracle and which presumably represented the completion of his most distant objective.

Shortly before his death Alexander consulted Ammon once more in tragic circumstances. His dear friend Hephaestion died of fever at Ecbatana early in 323 B.C. He immediately made elaborate preparations to celebrate his funeral and to pay him the ritual honours of an ancient hero, but besides this he sent to Ammon to ask whether Hephaestion should be honoured in this way or as a god. In due course the reply was received that he should be treated as a hero, and Alexander seems to have been quite content to accept this rank for his friend.⁷⁰

When he lay on his own death bed, according to some of our secondary authors, the king drew his ring from his finger and handed it to Perdikkas with instructions that his body was to be taken to Ammon.⁷¹ If this was his real intention it was never fulfilled. The body was brought to Egypt by Ptolemy and placed first at Memphis and later in his own great foundation of Alexandria. But it is highly uncertain whether in his last moments Alexander had expressed any wish on the matter. More probably it was all part of Ptolemy's propaganda to justify his taking possession of the body.

One might have expected that the importance of Ammon in connection with Alexander would have been followed by its playing a much greater part in Greek history. Possibly it was consulted often in the Hellenistic age. But our sources for this period are very defective and actually there is only one historic instance. In 304 B.C., after they had survived successfully the famous siege by Demetrius Poliorcetes, the Rhodians wished to express in a very special way their gratitude to their ally, Ptolemy. So they sent sacred ambassadors to Libya to enquire of the oracle of Ammon whether he advised the Rhodians to honour Ptolemy as a god.

When the oracle agreed, they set aside a square in his honour as a sacred precinct with on each side a colonnade a furlong in length and named it the *Ptolemaion*. Such is Diodorus' account.⁷² The site itself does not seem to have been identified. It was in this way that Ptolemy first acquired his title of *Soter* (Saviour) which was conferred on him as a cult epithet by the Rhodians.

It is interesting to compare the different treatment by the oracle of the two similar, but not quite parallel, enquiries from Alexander about the dead Hephaestion and from the Rhodians about the living Ptolemy. If we do not suppose that the response in either case was the result of quite accidental movements by the bearers of the sacred image, the difference can be explained on rational grounds. The heroization of a dead man would be quite consistent with Egyptian theology, but also the living Pharaoh, as Ptolemy was, could appropriately receive cult as an embodiment of the divine gods. Ptolemy himself already by 304 B.C. or later showed in return his respect for the Libyan shrine by a remarkable dedication. He caused Pindar's hymn to Ammon to be inscribed and set up at Siwa.⁷³

One more great African personage was legendarily connected with the oracle of Zeus—Hannibal of Carthage. He died in Bithynia in 183, probably by suicide, so as to avoid being surrendered to the Romans by the king Prusias I, whom he had served. Legend adorned his end with a typical oracle. It was said that long before he had received a prophecy from Ammon in iambic verse:

Libyssan soil will cover Hannibal's corpse.⁷⁴

He had taken 'Libyssan' in its normal meaning of 'Libyan' and so believed that, however far from home his campaigns led him, he was fated to die in his native land. But, of course, in the usual fashion of these homonymic oracles there was a place, Libyssa, just outside Nicomedeia, the capital of Bithynia. This was the site of Hannibal's tomb, which fulfilled the prophecy.

We have already seen a similar story with regard to Alexander, king of the Molossi and Dodona, and numbers of others of the same pattern occur in ancient literature. It is useless to seek for any basis in fact. Our evidence never otherwise shows a Carthaginian consulting Ammon, and the place was obviously chosen by some Greek romancer because it was the well-known source of prophecy in Africa. Again it is the only extant response attributed

to Ammon which occurs in literary form. In view of the method of prophecy and the fact that the priests were Libyan it is incredible that they would issue responses in Greek verse. If there is any root to the legend presumably it lies in the fact that the place near Nicomedeia where Hannibal was buried actually had a name which suggested the adjective 'Libyan'. This was too good a coincidence for a Hellenistic author to leave alone.

With Hannibal Ammon vanishes from Greek literature as a place for consultation. We shall see how in Roman literature it had a conventional function as a typical example. But no authors record actual enquiries. This may be partly a defect of our sources, but also partly corresponds to contemporary trends. From the end of the fourth century at least sophisticated Greeks had tended less and less to consult the traditional oracles. The decline of Delphi is a good illustration. But also a special factor may have influenced the popularity of Ammon. He ceased to be, as in the past, the favourite deity of Egyptian origin to attract Greek worshippers. Instead the new cult of Sarapis, linked with the traditional cult of Isis spread from Egypt itself over the eastern Mediterranean. Ammon in comparison made no new converts.⁷⁵ So it may be right to suppose that the Libyan deserts were not visited by Hellenic pilgrims as in the past and Strabo can describe it in the Augustan period as 'almost extinct'.

A papyrus gives us a casual glimpse of a visitor to the sanctuary in the second century A.D. if we can trust its evidence.⁷⁶ It is a private letter from Nearchus to Heliodorus, who may have been his brother. The text is somewhat fragmentary but it is possible to make out that he describes his travels with some warmth of literary enthusiasm—'And after taking a voyage up the river and reaching as far as Syene and whence the Nile happens to flow and to Libya, where Ammon utters prophetic oracles to all men, I made an auspicious enquiry and I scratched the names of my friends on the temples in eternal memorial as an act of worship. . . .' It is evident that Nearchus was making the most of his travels to his correspondent and introduced an echo of Herodotus in his reference to Syene, and perhaps of some poet in his reference to Ammon. However, he seems to give a proof of at least one Greek resident who visited Ammon in the second century.

Early in the same century Plutarch in his dialogue *On the Decline of Oracles* had introduced as one of the chief speakers,

Cleombrotus of Sparta, who is represented as a great explorer.⁷⁷ He had travelled far into the Red Sea and to the land of the Troglodytes. So it is not surprising that Plutarch concludes his description with the information that he had most recently visited Ammon, where, however, we are not told that he had consulted the oracle, but that he had discussed with the priests the scientific question why their ever-burning lamp used less oil each year. This problem provides the starting point for the discussion, in which Ammon as oracle plays no part. A near contemporary of Plutarch also makes literary use of the motive of an expedition. Dio Chrysostom in his speech called 'Libyan Tale'⁷⁸ devotes most of his work to a moralizing account of the fabulous monster, the Lamia. Above she was a beautiful woman, but from below the bosom ended as a snake. The climax of the oration is a narrative about a party of Greek ambassadors sent to consult the oracle of Ammon and marching through the desert accompanied by a strong force of horsemen and archers. Two young men of the party rashly run off the route to encounter a Lamia who reveals only her human part, and are both seized and slain by her.

The only actual Greek visitor in the second century of whom we can be certain from literary sources must have been Pausanias the guide-book writer. He twice refers to objects which he had seen in the sacred precinct: the monument of the Elean embassies and Ptolemy's copy of Pindar's hymn.⁷⁹ Unfortunately he does not mention whether he made an enquiry. He was a connoisseur of prophecies and had undertaken the arduous effort of consulting Trophonius at Lebadcia. So one feels that he would not be likely to have missed the occasion if it presented itself during his visit.

None of the other references in later Greek and Latin literature can be taken as evidence for the continued existence of the oracle, until we come to the sixth century A.D. In Justinian's reign the exploits of one of his captains, John, brother of Pappus, are recounted in a long epic poem by a contemporary, Corippus.⁸⁰ Two of his opponents, on the side of the Mauri, Guenfan and Carcasan are represented as consulting the oracle. Corippus spreads himself in exciting descriptions of the pagan ritual and the frenzy of the prophetess. For evidently he drew his inspiration not from the normal practice of the oracle of Ammon but from the traditional material of earlier epic. It would be impossible to prove that Corippus should be taken as serious evidence that the oracle was

consulted. His narrative may be purely imaginary and may simply be inserted to provide the appropriate kind of romantic episode.

If in fact the oracle was still in being in A.D. 546-548 (the time of this war with the Mauri) it must have been finally suppressed not much later. For Procopius records among the achievements of Justinian his suppression of paganism in the Libyan oases.⁸¹ He does not actually mention Ammon as a place. Instead he makes the peculiar statement that there were two towns named Augila separated by four days' journey which continued to his time to offer sacrifices to Ammon and Alexander. As Leclant has suggested, it looks as if Procopius has mistakenly reduplicated the name of the actual oasis of Augila and means to refer to the oasis of Siwa as one of the two. If so, this act of Justinian may represent the final termination of the oracle.

Otherwise Ammon only appears in Greek legends and even there not very often. This is not surprising since, as we have seen, it is quite probable that a general knowledge of the Libyan god only spread to Greece from the beginning of the fifth century at a time when Greek myths had mostly taken their established shape. As we saw, Callisthenes represented Alexander as having in mind two visits by heroic ancestors, Perseus and Heracles. Neither of these is represented in extant literature as consulting the oracle, but each has a similar association with it, though only in authors much later than the time of Alexander. When Ovid and Apollodorus tell the legend of Andromeda they set the scene in Ethiopia, and attribute the choice of the victim to an oracle of Ammon which had commanded that she must be exposed to the sea monster to atone for the boastful words of her mother.⁸² It is most unlikely that Ammon belongs to the primitive versions of the legend. Evidently all that was originally needed was for any unspecified prophet or oracle to explain the wrath of the gods as a necessary motive so that Perseus would find a princess to rescue. The introduction of Ammon belongs to some later stage when it was recognized as geographically the appropriate source for oriental prophecies.

More curious is the fact that Valerius Flaccus reproduces the same idea in connection with Hesione.⁸³ She was a Trojan princess similarly exposed to a sea monster because her father Laomedon had offended the gods and was similarly rescued by Heracles. While in the loose geography of ancient authors Ethiopia and

Ammon could appropriately be treated as neighbouring places, Troy on any supposition was far from Libya. In this instance it seems much more likely that the identity of the oracle centre has been falsely transferred on analogy from the legend of Perseus to that of Heracles, and probably at a very late stage. One may doubt, indeed, whether Callisthenes and his patron, Alexander, had this version of the legend in mind. More probably they simply thought of Heracles as visiting Ammon in the same wanderings in North Africa in which he encountered the giant, Antaeus. Already as early as the time of Pindar,⁸⁴ this opponent had been localized in Libya, though originally he may, as his name implies, have personified opposition in general.

The legendary connection of Andromeda and the oracle of Ammon may well have been invented before Alexander's expedition. His visit there may have actually occasioned another localization of a legend. Chares of Mitylene, Alexander's chamberlain, wrote a rather romanticized history of his master, in which he stated that Phaethon perished in Ethiopia at the oasis of Ammon and that he had a temple and oracle there and that the place produced amber.⁸⁵ As Jacoby suggests, this need not be taken very seriously. Phaethon as a child of the Sun could be appropriately located in a site that claimed to have the Well of the Sun.

In the Hellenistic period a number of myths and popular tales were re-written so as to fit them into the wider and more precise geographical setting known to the later Greeks. For instance the legend of Dionysus which had been located in various distant regions could be placed in Africa. Diodorus Siculus reproduces a very rationalized version in which Ammon as king of Libya is father of Dionysus by Amalthea and hides him in a Nysa situated on the river Triton.⁸⁶ Rhea, Ammon's wife, in jealousy makes war on him and drives him to Crete. Later there follows a war between Cronos and Dionysus. The Libyan followers of Dionysus 'before battle inform him that at the time when he was expelled from his kingdom Ammon had foretold to the native inhabitants that at a fixed time in the future his son, Dionysus, would come and would recover his ancestral kingdom and after establishing himself as lord of the inhabited earth would be regarded as a god. So Dionysus, conjecturing that Ammon had become a true prophet, founded the oracle of his father and built a town and assigned honours to him as a god and appointed men to take charge of the oracle-

centre—‘After the building of the town and the establishing of the oracle, they say that Dionysus was the first to consult the god about his campaign and receive from his father a response that by doing good services to mankind he would achieve immortality’.

The source of this re-writing of Greek mythology was an Alexandrian scholar, Dionysius Scytobrachion, living in the last years of the second century B.C. He followed Euhemerus in his formula that the traditional gods were really ancient kings, and he gave to their mythical deeds the reshaping appropriate to Hellenistic monarchs. In this instance in particular, as Jacoby has pointed out, there are evident echoes of a romantic version of Alexander’s consultation of Ammon.

The commentary of Servius has preserved a group of rationalizing legends on similar lines and meant to provide an historical explanation for the origin of the oracle:⁸⁷ Bacchus on his way to the Indians led an army through the Libyan desert and when exhausted with thirst he called on his father Juppiter for help. Juppiter showed him a ram which he followed till it scratched the soil with its foot at a place where a spring flowed out. So Bacchus erected a temple dedicated to Juppiter and gave the image ram’s horns and the name Ammon from the Greek word for sand (*hammos*). The other versions confine themselves to explaining why Ammon had ram’s horns and was called by that name. For instance ‘Ammon was born in a grove where there had been only a single ewe, so the natives who found him there believed him to be born of Juppiter and the ewe and called him Ammon because that is the kind of soil in the place’. Alternatively, ‘shepherds found a boy with the remarkable feature of ram’s horns, sitting on the sand and uttering prophecies. When they picked him up he became silent, but, when they put him down again he spoke. Subsequently when he suddenly vanished from human sight they believed he was a god and for this reason there they began to worship Ammon, because he had appeared in the sand’.

All these legends turn on the need to explain the ram’s horns and the tendency to connect Ammon with the Greek word ‘*hammos*’. But Servius included two other explanations. One alleged without further evidence that the Libyans called rams Ammon, and the other introduced a symbolic interpretation and suggested that the ram’s horns indicated that the oracle’s responses were twisted!

It is interesting to notice how all these stories about the origin of the oracle and the reason why Ammon had ram's horns entirely ignore Herodotus' account of the establishment of the cult. The connection with Egyptian Thebes is disregarded and the deity is given a local origin in Libya and explanations which presuppose his temple is in the desert. No doubt it was more satisfying to Greek worshippers to imagine that the object of their worship and the source of their oracular responses was not originally a branch establishment of an Egyptian temple.

Besides finding a place for Ammon in Greek mythology classical authors found him useful in explaining oriental pre-history. Already at the beginning of the fourth century B.C. Ctesias in his great account of the Mesopotamian past had represented Semiramis as consulting the oracle.⁸⁸ To him, unlike Herodotus, this Assyrian queen was a great warrior who after conquering most of Libya enquired of Ammon and was told that she would vanish from among men and in Asia would win among some peoples everlasting honour, which would come to pass at the time when her son, Ninyas, plotted against her. After various further exploits her son ultimately plots against her and instead of avenging herself on him she hands over the kingdom to him and vanishes from earth, according to some accounts being changed into a dove. By this explanation Ctesias was able to identify Semiramis with the Syrian goddess of the type of Ishtar. It is impossible to tell how far he may have been following legendary material which already existed, and how far he created it himself. But it is quite likely, for instance, that he was the first to bring in the oracle of Ammon to foretell, in a typically Hellenic way, the future deification of Semiramis and also to provide a convenient motive for her otherwise motiveless resignation of her kingdom.

A response of Ammon was also invented as a fiction to explain peculiarities of the Jews and their history. The reference occurs in the introductory chapters of Tacitus' *Histories*, book five, where he is starting to describe the Jewish war.⁸⁹ Evidently he was using already existing material of a strongly anti-semitic colouring. Without naming his sources he states that many authors agree that in the reign of the Pharaoh Bocchoris the Egyptians were smitten with a plague which tainted their bodies. The king consulted Ammon and was told to purify the realm by expelling the Jews as a race hateful to the gods. He did so, and the Jews thereafter used

to sacrifice rams to express their contempt of Ammon and to abstain from pork because pigs were prone to skin diseases like those which had occasioned their expulsion from Egypt.

The whole story is evidently the fabrication of some Hellenistic author, probably Alexandrian, who knew directly or indirectly the contents of the book of Exodus, and deliberately distorted it by an anti-Semitic re-interpretation. The plagues of Egypt instead of punishing Pharaoh, are a sign of the gods' wrath against the Jews from which the Egyptians suffer incidentally. The command of Jehovah to let his people go is converted into the advice of Ammon to expell the accursed race. The lamb of the passover becomes a deliberate insult to a god whom the Greeks respected, and the abhorrence of pork is a proof of the Jews' consciousness of their past uncleanness. The Hellenistic author was very ingenious in his rehandling of the material. He had apparently little heed for chronology, for in choosing to identify the Pharaoh of the Exodus with Bocchoris he placed the event in the last quarter of the eighth century B.C. Bocchoris appears to be the Greek version of the throne-name of Bokeuranef of the twenty-fourth dynasty, who had managed to impress himself on Greek tradition as a wise king, and therefore presumably was a suitable choice for one who to fit the purpose of the story must be a sympathetic figure.⁹⁰ As we have already seen, Ammon always suggested itself as an appropriate oracle to be introduced into oriental legends, and that is no doubt the explanation of its occurrence here.

NOTES

¹ Cf. e.g. Eduard Meyer in Roscher's *Lexicon*, I, 283, s.n. Ammon.

² On the general character of Egyptian oracles contrasted with Greek, cf. D. Mallet, *Les premiers établissements des Grecs en Egypte* (Mémoires de la mission archéologique française au Caire, Vol. 12, fasc. 1, Paris, 1893), p. 51. On the functioning of Egyptian oracles, see the discussions of J. Černý, *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale*, 30 (1930), 491-6; 35 (1936) 40 ff., and in *Brown Egyptological Studies*, IV (Providence, R. I. 1962) 35-48.

³ On Napata, cf. Eduard Meyer in Roscher, s.n. Ammon and e.g. Steindorf, *JEA*, 21 (1932) 147 ff. and J. Černý, *Brown Egyptological Studies*, IV, 38. For a similar method in Syria, vividly described, see Luc. *Syr. D.* 38.

⁴ J. Leclant, *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Archéologie orientale*, 49 (1950), 242. For the seven-day journey from Thebes to the Great Oasis, Hdt. 3, 26, 1, and for ten days from Thebes to Ammon, 4, 181, 2.

⁵ See G. Steindorff, H. Ricke and H. Antin, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, 69 (1933), 1-24.

⁶ Ahmed Fakhry, *Siuwa Oasis* (Le Caire, 1944).

⁷ D.S. 17, 50, 3. Cf. Curtius Rufus, 4, 7, 20.

⁸ The Well of the Sun: Hdt. 4, 181, 3; Aristotle, fr. 153 (Berlin) = Antigon. *Mirab.* 144; Arr. *An.* 3, 3, 4; D.S. 17, 50, 4; Curtius Rufus, 4, 7, 20; Lucr. 6, 848; Ovid, *Met.* 15, 309; Mela, 1, 39; Pliny, *HN.* 2, 106 and 5, 7, 21.

⁹ Hdt. 2, 57, 3. cf. *supra*, p. 56.

¹⁰ D.S. 17, 50, 6; Curtius Rufus, 4, 7, 23.

¹¹ D.S. 17, 51, 2 and for the illustrations from Egypt, cf. Richard A. Parker, A Saite oracle papyrus from Thebes in the Brooklyn Museum (*Brown Egyptological Studies*, IV, 1962).

¹² P. Oxy. 1358, fr. 2, 12 (Merkelbach, K2)

¹³ Hdt. 1, 41, 2. Cf. Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 129 ff.

¹⁴ For coins cf. Head, *Historia Nummorum*, 866 ff. On the early history of Cyrene the latest account is by François Chamoux, *Cyrène sous la monarchie des Battiades* (Bibl. Écol. française d'Athènes et de Rome, fasc. 176. Paris, 1953).

¹⁵ For Carnos, cf. e.g. Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I², 532. For Ammon's identification with Zeus, cf. Mallet, *Les premiers établissements*, 387.

¹⁶ Hdt. 3, 17; 25, 3; and 26, 1 ff. Cf. R. Crahay, *La Littérature oraculaire chez Hérodote*, 96.

¹⁷ Pl. *Pol.* 257 b and Paus. 10, 13, 5.

¹⁸ Aristotle, *Meteorologica*, 572 b 24; Eratosthenes ap. Str. 1, 3, 4 and 15.

¹⁹ Hdt. 2, 32 ff.

²⁰ Pindar, *P.* 9 for Telesicrates of Cyrene in 474 B.C., *P.* 5 and 4 for Arcesilas in 462 B.C.

²¹ Paus. 9, 16, 1. The hymn, Pindar, fr. 17. For heads of Ammon perhaps dating back to a fifth-century tradition, cf. G. Lippold, *Handbuch der Archäologie* (München, 1950), 112, 145 and 180.

²² Cf. *supra*, p. 58.

²³ Louvre. No. 4235. Cf. Appendix II, p. 277, no. 8. It was briefly noticed by Charles Picard, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1937, 1, p. 216 and fig. 23. Also Chamoux, *Cyrène*, p. 336, note 6, from which my attention was first drawn to this bronze. I wish to express my warmest thanks to M. Jean Charbonneaux, Conservateur en chef du Musée du Louvre for permission to publish it and to Mlle C. Devès, Charge de mission au Département des Antiquités grecques et romaines, for her kind assistance in examining it and obtaining the photograph, reproduced as pl. 4. The photograph was taken by M. Chugeville.

²⁴ For the green patina on objects from Dodona, often noted by archaeologists, cf. e.g. J. Charbonneaux, *Les Bronzes grecs* (Paris, 1958), 23.

²⁵ Westermann, *Pindari Vita*, I, 29. *Vitae* II and III omit mention, but record instead the invitation to feast at Delphi, on which cf. Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 399 and note 15. Suidas, s.n. tells that he died suddenly in the theatre after asking for the fairest thing in life to be given him.

²⁶ Cf. Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, I, 152 and note 24.

²⁷ At Sparta, Paus. 3, 18, 3. At Gytheum, Paus. 3, 21, 8. For Libys, Lysander's brother, X, *H.* 2, 4, 28 and D.S. 14, 13, 6 (the family connection). For a recent general survey of the cult of Ammon in Greece, cf. C. J. Classen, *Historia*, VIII (1959), 349 ff., 'The Libyan god Ammon in Greece before 331 B.C.'

²⁸ Paus. 5, 15, 11. Hermes was usually identified by the Greeks with Thoth, of whom Chonsu is another name. Cf. A. Erman, *A Handbook of Egyptian*

Religion, p. 12. For Hermes Parammon on the coins of Cyrene, cf. F. Chamoux, *Études d'Archéologie classique*, II (1959), 31 ff.

²⁹ Paus. 6, 8, 3. Cf. X. *H.* 1, 2, 1 and D.S. 13, 68, 1 (where Eubotas' victory is only used as a chronological datum) and Ael. *V.H.* 10, 2 for another story about him also concerning a statue.

³⁰ Eur. *Alc.* 112 ff. and *El.* 734. Aristophanes, *Av.* 618 and 716. The nickname Ammon applied to Hipponicus, the son of Callias (Kirchner, *PA*, 7651), if contemporary, indicates a familiarity with the god at the time of the Persian wars, but the story about Hipponicus is a fabrication (Heraclid, *Pont. ap. Ath.* 12, 537a).

³¹ Hellanicus, *F.Gr. Hist.* 4 f. 56 (Ath. 14, 652a).

³² Polyaeus, 7, 3. Cf. Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften*, I, 35-149 and 166-78 and Mallet, *Les premiers Établissements*, 45. Gutschmid rather unnecessarily supposed that 'the God Ammon' meant Amon-Ra of Thebes. The Greek source may be Aristagoras of Miletus (cf. fr. 5 *FHG*, II, p. 98) as Gutschmid suggests.

³³ Hdt. 2, 152.

³⁴ Hdt. 2, 18, 2 with Well's note (How and Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus*, I, 168).

³⁵ Plu. *Cim.* 18, 7.

³⁶ Th. 1, 112, 3.

³⁷ Cf. Parke and Wormell, *D.O.*, 1, 34 and note 80.

³⁸ Plu. *Nic.* 13 and 14, 7.

³⁹ Th. 6, 50, 4 (the raid on the Great Harbour) and 8, 1, 1 (oracle-mongers after the Sicilian disaster).

⁴⁰ Cf. *supra*, p. 80.

⁴¹ Th. 7, 50, 2.

⁴² The silver bowl first in *IG*, II², 1415, l. 617 of 375/4 B.C. and later in 1421, 1423, 1424 and 1428, as restored by A. M. Woodward, *BSA*, 57 (1962), 5 ff., who has suggested that the erasure in 1430, l. 14 of 366/5 B.C. shows when the bowl was removed from the *Opisthodomos*: perhaps for transfer to the new shrine in the Peiraeus. Cf. also Ferguson, *Treasurers of Athens*, 180. On the cult of Ammon at Athens, cf. Sterling Dow, *Harvard Theol. Rev.* 30 (1937), 184 ff. He notes that no dedication to Ammon has been found in Athens and (p. 221) gives a survey of the theophoric names derived from Ammon as shown by Attic inscriptions.

⁴³ Alphonse Dain, *Inscriptions grecques du Musée du Bardo* (Paris, 1936) no. 1. pp. 12 ff. For Cratinus' other proposal in 363 B.C., cf. *IG*, II², 109 (*SIG*, 175).

⁴⁴ *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Suppl. Vol. I (Athenian Studies presented to William Scott Ferguson), 1940, p. 49.

⁴⁵ *IG*, II², 1642 with A. M. Woodward, *BSA*, 57 (1962), 8.

⁴⁶ *Aθ. Π.* 61, 7 with Sandys' commentary, and *Din. fr.* 14, 2.

⁴⁷ *IG*, II², 1496 l. 96 (*SIG*, 1029). In the same year, *IG*, II², 338 (*SIG*, 281).

⁴⁸ Cf. *supra*, p. 210.

⁴⁹ Plu. *Lys.* 20, 4; Paus. 3, 18, 3. Stephanus of Byzantium (s.n. Αφύτη) states that 'the town had an oracle of Ammon', but I presume that this is a garbled reference to the local cult.

⁵⁰ *BMC. Maced.* p. 61. Head, *Historia Nummorum*², 209 ff. Hugo Faebler,

Die antiken Münzen von Makedonien und Paeonia (Berlin, 1935), 2, 44 ff. For Cyzicus, etc., see Head, *op. cit.*; under the various names. I am indebted to Dr. Colin M. Kraay for guidance in this subject.

⁵¹ D.S. 14, 13. For a discussion, see Parke, *JHS*, 50 (1930), 53.

⁵² Ephorus, *F. Gr. Hist.* 70 f. 206 (Plu. *Lys.* 25). Cf. D.S. l.c. and Nepos, *Lys.* (6) 3, 1.

⁵³ Pl. *Alc.* 2, 148 d.

⁵⁴ Pl. *Leg.* 5, 738 c.

⁵⁵ On this highly controversial subject the discussions which I chiefly follow are: U. Wilcken, *Sitzb. Preuss. Akad.-Wiss.* (Ph. Hist. Kl.) 1928, 576-603; 1930, 159-76; 1938, 301-2. F. Oertel, *Rh. Mus.* 89 (1940) 66-74. W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* II, 347-59.

⁵⁶ The only ancient statement in a Greek source that Alexander was actually enthroned as Pharaoh by the priests occurs in Ps.-Call. *A*, 1, 34, 2. From its pro-Egyptian sentiment, it might have invented the ceremony, but also it might have been interested in preserving an authentic fact.

⁵⁷ Callisthenes, *F. Gr. Hist.* 121 f. 14 (Str. 17, 1, 45).

⁵⁸ Arr. 3, 3, 1 (πρόος). He goes on to refer in a difficult phrase to Alexander's wish to enquire about his ancestry. I differ from Tarn's interpretation of this as referring to his adoption as a Pharaoh. For cruder later versions, Justin, 11, 11, 1 and Orosius, 3, 16, 12.

⁵⁹ C.R. 4, 7, 5.

⁶⁰ Ptolemy, *F. Gr. Hist.* 138 f. 8.

⁶¹ Tarn, *Alexander*, II, 351, appears to agree that the priest addressed Alexander in Greek, but supposes that he called him 'son of Ammon', and attributes to the villainy of Callisthenes the substitution of 'Zeus' for 'Ammon'. This seems to me quite unnecessary. The priest must be taken to have said 'son of Zeus', which he quite reasonably supposed represented in Greek that the Pharaoh was the son of the highest god. Tarn's attempt to argue that Arr. *Ind.* 35, 8 proves that Alexander distinguished between Zeus and Ammon seems to me to prove just the opposite—that he treated them as identical, except in local name.

⁶² Cf. *supra*, p. 200.

⁶³ Černý, *op. cit.*, p. 36. Cf. note 3 above. He cites an instance of Thothmes III (1490-1430) receiving an oracular answer in the innermost sanctuary.

⁶⁴ D.S. 17, 51; C.R. 4, 7, 23 (address, enquiry about world-rule, reference to Philip's murderers), Plu. *Alex.* 27, 3; Justin, 11, 11 (address, enquiry about Philip's murderers, and then enquiry about world-rule). The priest's bad Greek, Plu. *Alex.* 27, 5.

⁶⁵ Plu. *Alex.* 27, 5.

⁶⁶ Arr. 6, 19, 4.

⁶⁷ Arr. *Ind.* 18, 11. Tarn (*Alexander*, II, 351, note 5) deduces from a comparison with Arr. *Ind.* 36, 3, that Apollo was one of the gods indicated by oracle.

⁶⁸ Arr. 6, 3, 1.

⁶⁹ U. Wilcken, *Sitzb. Preuss. Akad.* (Ph. Hist. Kl.) 1928, 593.

⁷⁰ Arr. 7, 14, 7 (where he reports the alternative enquiry to Ammon as only recorded by some sources) and 23, 6. D.S. 17, 115, 6 and Plu. *Alex.* 72, record

Ammon as authorizing sacrifice to Hephaestion as a god. Cf. Lucian, *Cal. non cred.* 17, for the cult without reference to Ammon.

⁷¹ C.R. 6, 15, 4. Cf. Justin, 12, 15, 7 and 13, 4, 6.

⁷² D.S. 20, 100, 3. For Soter, Paus. 1, 8, 6. For a Rhodian paeon to Ptolemy, Gorgon, *F.Gr. Hist.* 515 f. 19.

⁷³ Cf. *supra*, p. 58.

⁷⁴ For the text of the oracle, D.S. 25, 19 (Tzetzes, *Hist.* 1, 27); Plu. *Flamin.* 20. It is also referred to by Paus. 8, 11, 11. For Libyssa as the place of his burial, Pliny, *H.N.* 5, 148, Ammianus Marcellinus, 22, 9, 3 and simply as a place St. Byz. s.n. Λιβύσσης, Alexander Polyhistor, *F.Gr. Hist.* 273 f. 125. Nepos, *Hann.* (23), 12 omits both the oracle and the place-name. Arrian (*F.Gr. Hist.* 156 f. 28), quoted in the *Scholia* to Tzetzes, l.c., described the place as in his day called Βουρλίον.

⁷⁵ See T. A. Brady, *The reception of the Egyptian cults by the Greeks* (330-30 B.C.), University of Missouri Studies, 10, 1 (1935), especially appendix 1, 44 ff. Cf. Str. 17, 1, 43.

⁷⁶ Kenyon and Bell, *Lond.* III, no. 854 and L. Mitteis and U. Wilcken, *Grundzüge*, I², 2, p. 147, no. 117.

⁷⁷ Plu. 3, 410 a.

⁷⁸ Dio Chr. 5, 24.

⁷⁹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 211 and 230.

⁸⁰ Corippus, *Johannis*, 3, 81-4 and 5, 147-180. Cf. *infra*, p. 250.

⁸¹ Procopius, *De Aed.* 6, 2. Cf. J. Leclant, *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Archéologie orientale*, 49 (1950), 194 ff., but I disagree with his views that Corippus is real evidence of consultation.

⁸² Ovid, *Mét.* 4, 671 and 5, 17; Apollod. 2, 4, 3.

⁸³ Val. Fl. 2, 482.

⁸⁴ Pi. I. 4, 52.

⁸⁵ *F.Gr. Hist.* 125 f. 8 (Pliny, *H.N.* 37, 33).

⁸⁶ D.S. 3, 73 (Dionysius Skytobrachion, *F.Gr. Hist.* 32 f. 8).

⁸⁷ Servius in Verg. *Aen.* 4, 196.

⁸⁸ D.S. 2, 14, 3 and 20, 1 (*F. Gr. Hist.* 688 f. 1—the commentary not yet published).

⁸⁹ Tacitus, *H.* 5, 2.

⁹⁰ *CAH*, 3, 276-7.

CHAPTER X

DODONA AND AMMON IN THE ROMAN POETS

As we have seen, by the end of the Roman republic the three oracles which we have been studying had all largely ceased to function for practical purposes. Olympia may still have provided forecasts of athletes' prospects, but there is no sign that it was generally consulted. Dodona was probably not operating at all. Ammon may still have continued, less disturbed in its isolation by the changes of politics in the Mediterranean, but it is unlikely that it was visited for enquiries by Greeks or Romans, with the possible exception of residents in Egypt. At the same time two of the three oracles retained a place in classical literature. For Roman writers, particularly poets, found it convenient at times to use Dodona and Ammon for picturesque effect. Olympia as oracle had not the same significance and does not appear at all in Roman authors. This is not surprising when one remembers that it had no prominent place in Greek literature. It was not mentioned by Homer or Hesiod, and Pindar who did refer to it was probably more respected than read by the Romans. Its specialization on answering athletic enquirers had taken place so early that no writer in Latin can ever have been acquainted with it as a source of general responses, and Greek games were not a subject of interest to the Italians.

Dodona and Ammon were in a much stronger position to make an impression on Roman literature. Dodona appeared in Homer, Hesiod and the Greek tragedians. Ammon was probably unmentioned in Greek literature before the fifth century, but it had caught up later in popularity and particularly its consultation by Alexander guaranteed its position in Greek tradition. So it is not surprising that these two find a place in the conventional material of the Roman poets.

Catullus is the first Roman writer extant to name either of the oracles. He mentions Ammon, with which he must have been

familiar from Hellenistic literature, but only as a picturesque point of geographical reference. Lesbia could only satisfy him if she gave him as many kisses as 'the great number of the Libyan sands that lie in silphium-bearing Cyrene between the oracle of sweltering Juppiter and the consecrated tomb of old Battus'.¹ This gently flippant mention is no doubt Catullus' own invention and stands quite apart from the general line of the Roman poets' allusions.

Vergil employs picturesque adjectives connected with Dodona, but almost seems to avoid direct mention of the oracles. For instance in the *Eclogues* doves are called 'Chaonian' and all three ancient commentators refer learnedly to the oracle-centre in Epirus.² But in the context, where Vergil is simply using a simile of doves fleeing from eagles, the subject of divination is not involved. Again when Aeneas is leaving the shore of Epirus Helenus loads his ships with 'mighty silver and Dodonaean cauldrons'.³ These are partly the typical gifts of heroic generosity, but also no doubt Vergil felt that cauldrons would be an appropriate product of Epirus. At the same time, as we have seen, he does not represent Aeneas as consulting the oracle of Dodona, but instead makes Helenus give him a very Apolline prophecy. Similarly too, his arrival at Carthage brings Aeneas within possible contact with the oracle of Ammon. His rival in marriage with Dido is Iarbas, described as the son of Ammon and a nymph of the Garamantes.⁴ Vergil mentions his devotion to the worship of Juppiter and the hundred temples and hundred altars which he had consecrated to him, but the oracle-centre of Siwa is never directly introduced into the narrative. Perhaps he felt that with the consultation of the Sibyl in Book Six and the briefer scene at Delos in Book Three he had included enough dramatic material of this kind.

The only place where Vergil directly refers to either of these places as sources of prophecy, is in the *Georgics* where he is mentioning the trees which grow from seeds and takes as his final example—'the oaks which Greeks regarded as oracles'.⁵ Here the allusion is just part of the picturesque and mildly playful way in which the poet dresses up his rather prosaic subject.

The more usual occasion for introducing allusions to oracles was as analogies for the poet's own power of prophecy. Propertius twice uses Dodona in this way. In his first book he claims: 'Chaonian doves would not surpass me at telling in love which girl will subdue

which boy'.⁶ In a later poem he boasts a particular instance of his prophetic powers. Panthus has abandoned his mistress and has married. 'But to you now I seem a truer diviner than Dodona, for that handsome lover of yours has taken a wife.' Tibullus never mentions either place, but Ovid makes a similar use of Ammon in conjunction with Delphi. At the climax of the *Ars Amatoria* when he has brought the lover to the consummation of his pursuit he writes: 'But neither Phoebus' tripods, nor Ammon with his horns will utter truer words to us than my Muse.'⁷ Again in the *Tristia* in a very different context we find Delphi and Dodona mentioned together: 'Must my life be brought to its end far from my native land under the northern heavens where the lefthand shore of the Euxine lies? If Delphi or Dodona had told this to me, each of the places would have seemed to be empty of meaning.' Ovid also had occasion to mention both Ammon and the oak of Jupiter in the *Metamorphoses* as we have already noticed.

Lucan works in references to Dodona for picturesque effect. In describing the rallying of the forces of Greece to join Pompey he gives a typical list of places and peoples, decorating them with literary allusions. Among these occur the lines: 'The Dryopes rush, and the Selloi have left their oaks silent on the Chaonian peak'.⁸ Here the Latin contains a certain degree of ambiguity for the silence of the oaks might be regarded as a description of their previous condition or as an effect produced by the departure of the Selloi. Old commentators have taken the former interpretation, but it is much more likely that Lucan meant to suggest that the rush to join Pompey was so great that the departure of the priests caused the oracle to close. It does not weaken the force of this interpretation that actually the Selloi had ceased to act as prophets at Dodona for many centuries. Lucan was simply constructing a literary allusion to Homer.

Similarly in Book Six Lucan wishes to introduce with appropriate tones of horror Sextus Pompeius who does not seek knowledge of the future by respectable oracles or augury, but by necromantic devices contrived by a Thessalian witch. 'He neither consulted the tripods of Delos nor the Pythian caverns, nor did he care to ask what Dodona (which nourished man with its first fruits) would sound from the bronze vessels of Jupiter, nor who could tell the fates by entrails. . . .'⁹ We have already noticed this passage as the earliest explicit reference to the idea that Dodonaean divination had

employed the sound of a cauldron. It is unlikely that Lucan himself deliberately invented the notion, but it would have been possible that, having come across proverbial allusions to the 'brazen vessel of Dodona', he mis-interpreted his sources by supposing it was part of the prophetic mechanism. More likely he had read some Hellenistic author who implied that this was the oracle's technique, but, if so, Lucan need not be taken as correct evidence either for the practice of his own day or for that of Sextus Pompeius' time. Just previously he had referred to the 'tripods of Delos', though the island had been virtually deserted since its sack in 88 B.C. and had never had an active oracle in the classical period. In fact the passage is a good illustration of the picturesque use which a Silver Latin poet could make of traditions about Greek oracles, and of the tendency in this kind of literature to stress, not the original and historic methods of divination, but some more fantastic feature which had won a place in popular memory.

For the tendency to give prominence to the brazen vessel of Dodona rather than to other objects in the sanctuary we may compare Valerius Maximus, who even when writing in prose shows somewhat the same rhetorical exaggerations as Lucan. In describing the oracle of Amphiaraus he says: 'His ashes have acquired the same degree of honour as is paid to the Pythian tripod, the brazen vessel of Dodona and the fountain of Ammon'.¹⁰ Is one to take it that since the Pythian tripod played a part in the consultation of the Delphic oracle, therefore Valerius Maximus supposed that the brazen vessel at Dodona was also part of the mechanism of divination there? If so, one must logically suppose, too, that the fountain of the Sun at Ammon had a part to play in answering enquiries and, as we shall see, one other Roman author indeed writes as if that was his meaning.

Without going as far as this, Lucan himself also illustrates the somewhat distorted image which was suggested to contemporaries by Ammon. He is describing the visit of Cato to the shrine, which he represents as poor and unadorned.¹¹ This gives occasion for a rhetorical contrast with the corrupting effect of Roman gold. The feature of the place is the only wood in Libya. Lucan does not make clear that the oasis produced palm trees: instead he explains that the cause is the presence of a spring. But he does not call it the Well of the Sun nor mention its traditional changes of temperature. Before the temple were standing enquirers from the East who gave

way to the Roman. There ensues a rhetorical dialogue. Labienus urges Cato to test the oracle by an enquiry. But Cato refuses in a magnificent declaration in which he maintains with many rhetorical questions that there is nothing that the oracle can tell him which he needs to know. Lucan expresses the view that this exposition of Stoic self-sufficiency was in itself worthy of an oracular utterance.

The author of the *Aetna* sets us a curious problem in his one reference to Dodona. He is invoking Apollo in proper style to come and inspire his verse—'whether Cynthus holds you or whether Hyla is more pleasing to you than Delos, or whether Dodona is preferred'.¹² This is the only passage in ancient literature which treats Dodona as if it was a seat of Apollo, and it is not surprising that there have been attempts to get rid of the reference by emendation or discount it as due to some mental confusion of the anonymous author. But the fact that he has just previously referred elliptically to Apollo Hylates of Cyprus is at least a warning that he is a consciously learned writer and may therefore have some basis for his choice of invocation. The process of searching for a hidden meaning was carried rather far by Bickel, who tried to argue on the basis of some very uncertain combinations of passages that 'in the Imperial period the oracle of Zeus at Dodona went under the name of Apollo'. This is very unconvincing. We have seen earlier that there clearly existed a rivalry between Dodona and Delphi, and it is most unlikely that Apollo was admitted to the functioning of the oracle, but this need not imply a complete hostility to his cult. There is preserved in the Louvre a magnificent sixth-century bronze statuette of a standing Apollo which came from Dodona and is inscribed in the Corinthian alphabet 'Etymocledas dedicated to Zeus'.¹³ This seems to be our only evidence for Apollo accepted inside the sanctuary at Dodona. But he was recognized and worshipped by the Epirotes. Aelian in his work *On Animals* has an elaborate account of a grove there, marked out by a circuit wall and left uncultivated in honour of the god.¹⁴ Inside the grove were snakes consecrated to him, and on the festival day annually the priestesses went in with food for them. If they accepted it, it was an omen of prosperity: if they did not, it meant the contrary. Unfortunately Aelian gives no indication where in Epirus this sacred precinct was. But one may risk a conjecture that the author of the *Aetna* had read about it somewhere, and took it that Dodona

was a sufficient geographical equivalent. Incidentally, Aelian in the same work also describes the cult of Apollo Hylates. So perhaps both writers may have drawn directly or indirectly from the same source. At least this is a safer hypothesis than the belief that the passage shows any special knowledge of the oracle of Dodona in Imperial times.

Seneca in his tragedies never refers to Ammon, but his use of Dodona is interesting. In one play only—the *Hercules Oetaeus*—his Greek source (Sophocles' *Trachiniae*) involved references to the oracle.¹⁵ But where in the original Greek tragedy Heracles had cited the oak tree and the Selloi as the only source, in Seneca he says: 'This fate the prophetic oak once gave me and at Parnassus the cavern shaking the temples of Cyrrha with its bellow.' Besides the super-added rhetoric the Roman author does not seem to have been content to leave Dodona as the only source. He throws in Delphi as more familiar and more adapted to exaggeration in treatment.

This is the only response of Dodona which Seneca mentions, but also he works in a reference to the speaking timber of the Argo in a chorus in his *Medea* which has no parallel in Euripides' tragedy. It was struck dumb with horror at the Symplegades! Also twice he suggests the great size of trees by comparing them to the Chaonian oak. In this his use of Dodona is simply conventional.¹⁶

Statius in the *Thebais* illustrates even more this tendency in Silver Latin poetry to group Dodona and Delphi together in rhetorical pleonasm; for instance, when praising a prophet who had committed suicide—'Not in vain did Apollo teach you heavenly matters and think you worthy of his laurel, and Dodona mother of groves and the maid of Cirrha will rejoice to keep the people in suspense while Phoebus is silent'.¹⁷ This last sentence, in Statius' indirect manner, implies that the oracles will gladly be silent in mourning for the dead prophet. Dodona and Delphi are so combined in the sentence that one might suppose the poet regarded Apollo as the deity inspiring both, but this is not his real meaning. Elsewhere Statius produces much longer catalogues of oracle-centres. Amphiaras when praying to Juppiter compares the gift of prophecy which he receives with Delphi, Dodona, Ammon, Patara, Branchidae and the oracle of the Arcadian Pan.¹⁸ Similarly when he dies the sources of divination are represented as mourning him. The list includes Delphi, Delos, Claros, Branchidae, Patara, Ammon, Dodona and Thymbra.¹⁹ In both

places Statius refers to the prophetic oak and calls Ammon 'the grove of the horned prophet'.

None of these poets had occasion to describe an actual consultation. But Silius Italicus in his epic on the Punic war included a long description of an enquiry at Ammon by Bostar acting as the ambassador of Hannibal. We have seen already that legend represented Hannibal as receiving from Ammon an equivocal response which prophesied his death.²⁰ The choice of the oasis of Siwa as the source of the prophecy was no doubt because it was the famous African centre of divination. Similarly one may assume that Silius found no evidence for this consultation in his annalistic sources, but simply regarded an enquiry at a shrine as part of the appropriate machinery of epic, and therefore of course selected Ammon as the place.

The description begins with a reference to the fountain with its changing temperatures, but to Silius as to Lucan and to Statius the chief feature of the site is the grove.²¹ He puts into the mouth of a local chieftain, Arisbas, an account of its origin. This starts from the Herodotean tale of the two doves flying from Thebes, to Dodona and Libya.²² But here an additional marvel is introduced. There was no grove at the oasis when the dove arrived. It alighted between the horns of a ram and uttered prophecies. 'At once a wood and groves of ancient timber arose, and the oaks that now touch the stars came thus on their first day.' This miraculous forest of oaks is evidently developed from the combined ideas that the oasis was remarkable for its trees and also was parallel to Dodona. Hence Silius incredibly introduced this species into North Africa and works up his picture of the consultation on the analogy of what he evidently imagined would have been the procedure in both places. 'The doors flew open with a sudden creak, and a more powerful light in a moment struck our eyes. The priestess gleaming in a white robe stood before the altars and the populace struggled to come together. After I had poured out from my heart the words which I had been told to say, lo! the god of a sudden entered the propheticess. On high the murmurs rolled from the crashing timbers in the echoing grove and a voice now greater than is wont burst on the air.' The oracular response which follows is in thirteen lines of hexameters. It is a vague, rather than an actually ambiguous, prophecy of Hannibal's campaign based loosely on the words of the Cumaean Sibyl in Vergil's *Aeneid*.

The main conclusion to be drawn is that Silius was completely out of touch with the real contemporary oracle of Ammon and depended for his subject matter entirely on a mixture of literary reminiscence and his own imagination. Yet the oracle of Zeus Ammon was still functioning at the time, and Juvenal, writing about the same period, even thinks of it as active when Delphi has fallen silent. He describes the credulous Roman ladies who loved to hear outlandish prophets. 'Whatever the astrologer has told them, they will believe is fetched from the fountain of Ammon, since the Delphic oracles are ceasing and the human race is condemned to a future wrapped in darkness.'²³ The reference to the fountain in connection with the responses is, as we have seen, typical of Roman poets without necessarily implying a belief that it had a place in the prophetic procedure.

After Silius and Juvenal the great gap in the Roman poetic tradition leaves no mention of Dodona or Ammon till Ausonius in the fourth century A.D. In his Latin epigrams he paraphrased some of the poems preserved in the Greek Anthology. It is interesting, therefore, to notice that, when treating in this way Lucilius' satirical poem on the oracular response given to the three athletes, he transfers it from the prophet, Olympus, to Ammon.²⁴ Presumably the fact that it had been possible to make enquiries at Olympia was forgotten, and the improbability of setting the scene in Libya did not worry Ausonius. He only mentions Dodona in one ingenious literary passage where, reproaching a correspondent for his silence, he cites various examples of natural noises and ends by referring to the echoes of the bronze vessel there.

The prose writers of the period were very similar in their use of literary allusion. Symmachus, the friend of Ausonius and protagonist of the old religion, when writing in a letter about silence between correspondents justifies himself on the analogy of the ancient oracle-centres. 'Perhaps a long silence is preferable. Do you not see that the oracles which once spoke have ceased, that no letters are read in the cave at Cumae, that Dodona does not talk with its leaves, that no prophetic song is heard from the vapour-holes of Delphi?'²⁵ This passage is just a conventional instance of the rhetorical piling up of examples, and should not be used to prove that any special event at Dodona had lately stopped its activity.

Claudian at the end of the fourth century does not mention

Ammon, but makes much use of Dodona.²⁶ He sarcastically cites as an example of poetic exaggeration the legend that Minerva herself put the beam from the prophetic oak into the keel of the Argo. He refers to Dodona in connection with the change of mankind's diet from acorns to wheat. When he wishes to praise Stilicho's generalship, he describes his victories as greater than those of the ancient Romans who defeated king Pyrrhus—'the squadrons of Dodona which boasted in vain the fate-revealing oak'. These are merely literary reminiscences, and it is best to explain in the same way the one passage where he seems to refer to contemporary events. In describing the journey of the emperor in his *Panegyric on the Third Consulship of Honorius* (A.D. 395) he tells how 'the fair Enipeus was amazed and high Dodona, and, speaking again, the Chaonian oaks uttered their songs in your honour'.²⁷ If taken literally this would seem to imply a revival of the oracle. But no doubt it is not so intended. The Christian emperor would never have consulted a pagan god. But poetic licence and literary tradition expected of a writer of panegyrics this sort of imaginative rhetoric.

Sixty years later Sidonius Apollinaris in his *Panegyric on the emperor Majorian* (A.D. 458) could still produce a long list of pagan methods of prophecy as though they were yet in use. 'Doubtless if the Chaldaean astrologer observes the stars on a right track, if the Colchian knows herbs, if the Tuscan calls forth lightning and the Thessalian ghosts, if the Lycian lots have sense, if birds speak our fates by their flight, if Ammon in learned bleatings utters a sacred groan from beneath the Syrtis, if finally you prophesy the truth, Phoebus, Themis, Dodona, then after our days this Julius will be emperor.'²⁸ This display of classical erudition had no prejudicial effect on the author becoming later a bishop and achieving canonization.

A century later, as we have seen, the last of the Latin epic poets, Corippus, made prominent use of the oracle of Ammon in his *Johannis*—a narrative of the campaigns of John, brother of Pappus, against the Mauri (A.D. 546–8).²⁹ He is explicitly Christian in his outlook and speaks with scorn of the pagan beliefs. Hence the Moorish opponents are shown as consulting oracles, but not the imperial commanders. The show-piece is a passage where Carcasan, the native leader, visits the oasis of Siwa:³⁰ 'the territory of the Marmarides where horned Ammon dwells. He asks for the

responses of hard-hearted Juppiter. This god whom you vainly consult loves as a deceiver to mislead miserable minds. Grisly he rejoices in blood and seeks to bring all peoples to perdition'. There follows a lengthy and vivid account of the way in which the priestess works herself into a frenzy while dancing with cymbals and at last by the light of the moon utters a long prophecy of a typical classical form, containing the assurance that the Mauri will hold the plains of Byzacium and Carcasan will enter Carthage carried on high through the city in procession. Corippus has drawn most of his inspiration from ancient descriptions of the Pythia or the Sibyl in frenzy, though his addition of cymbals and dancing suggests a local African element. But it is impossible to believe that the Egyptian ritual of Ammon had really been transformed into this orgy.

Also the response itself contains ambiguities typical of the classical tradition. As Corippus explains, the Mauri held the plains of Byzacium with their bones when defeated in battle, and Carcasan entered Carthage when he had been decapitated and his head was carried there in triumph. These conventional ingenuities are probably not based on any actual prophecy, but are simply the epic machinery inserted by Corippus to provide a proper framework for the defeat of the Mauri and the beheading of their leader. If allowance is made for his great distance in time from the heyday of the Roman epic, he is a remarkably successful poet, and it is a strangely appropriate circumstance that the last introduction of an oracle of Juppiter into Latin literature shows the god on the side of the vanquished. The day of the pagan oracles has passed.

NOTES

¹ Catullus, 7, 3.

² Verg. *Ecl.* 9, 11. See Servius', Probus', and Junius Philargyrius' comments.

³ Verg. *Aen.* 3, 467. Cf. *supra*, p. 148.

⁴ Verg. *Aen.* 4, 196 ff.

⁵ Verg. *Georg.* 2, 16. Cf. *Georg.* 1, 149: et victum Dodona negaret, alluding to acorns as food.

⁶ Propertius, 1, 9, 5 and 2, 21, 3.

⁷ Ovid, *A.A.* 3, 789 and *Tr.* 4, 8, 41.

⁸ Lucan, 3, 179.

⁹ Lucan, 6, 425. Cf. *supra*, p. 90.

¹⁰ Val. Max. 8, 15, ext. 2.

¹¹ Lucan, 9, 511 ff.

¹² *Aetna*, 4 ff. Cf. E. Bickel, *Rh. Mus.* 79 (1930), 279 ff. His argument is

based on a combination of Lactant. *Div. Just. Epit.* 18, p. 688 (Vind.) and D.H. 1, 19, 3 for which cf. *supra*, p. 147. Lactantius in the phrase 'ex persona Apollinis' was probably referring to an alleged Sibylline oracle, not to Dodona. Bickel also cites Str. 7, 1, 1, for which cf. *supra*, p. 39.

¹³ Cf. *infra*, Appendix II, p. 275, no. 2.

¹⁴ Ael. *NA*, 11, 2. Apollo Hylates, Ael. *N.A.* 11, 7.

¹⁵ Seneca, *H. Oet.* 1473. Cf. *supra*, p. 59.

¹⁶ Seneca, *Med.* 349. Chaonian oak, *Oed.* 728, *H. Oet.* 1623.

¹⁷ Statius, *Th.* 3, 106 ff.

¹⁸ Statius, *Th.* 3, 474 ff.

¹⁹ Statius, *Th.* 8, 196 ff.

²⁰ Cf. *supra*, p. 230.

²¹ Silius Italicus, 3, 6 ff. and 645 ff.

²² Did Silius think that the Thebes of legend was the Boeotian, not the Egyptian city? He makes the dove which flies to Libya cross the sea (l.c. line 680).

²⁴ Juv. 6, 553.

²⁴ Ausonius, *Epigr.* 95. Cf. *supra*, p. 189. *Epist.* 29, 23.

²⁵ Symmachus, *Epist.* 4, 33. P. R. Franke (*Münze.* 28, note 19) appears to be unjustified in combining this with Servius, Vergil, *Aen.* 3, 466, and therefore supposing that the Illyrian destruction of Dodona can be dated to the end of the fourth century A.D. Cf. *supra*, p. 67.

²⁶ Claudian, *Bell. Goth.* (Minerva), 135 (Dodonaea agmina); *Rapt. Pros.* 30 (glande relicta).

²⁷ Claudian, *De tert. Cons. Honorii*, (7), 116.

²⁸ Sidonius, *Pan.* 5, 259 ff. Ammon appears again in *Pan.* 9, 201, and in *Epist.*, 6, 12, 6 he refers to Dodonigenae in connection with acorns.

²⁹ Cf. *supra*, p. 232.

³⁰ Corippus, *Joh.* 5, 148 ff. and see the numerous references in the index to the Bonn edition (1836) under Ammon, to which add 6, 116.

CONCLUSION

The three oracles which have been considered were all regarded as the direct mouthpieces of Zeus, and while to some extent this is a nominal connection between them, it has also been shown that in some respects their associations go deeper than that. They cannot quite be called a triple partnership, but in classical times at least they showed a certain awareness of each other and some degree of mutual contact.

The link between Dodona and Olympia may go back to primitive times in the sense that both cult-centres of Zeus had very ancient origins in north-west Greece. We cannot prove how long the god of the thunder and the oak tree had been worshipped at his site in Epirus. Some scholars (unnecessarily, as it seems to the present writer) suppose a previous cult of an earth goddess. But if instead the worship of Zeus was the original feature of the place, it appears to be dated chronologically well back into the earlier half of the second millennium B.C. and is probably treated correctly in Homer as already an established oracle before the Trojan war. The peculiar Selloi with their ritual retention of primitive practices are quite unlike any priesthood in classical Greece, and this is partly to be explained by the high antiquity of the tradition and partly also by connections with northern Europe. In Herodotus' day the priestesses had Greek names, and the very title of Hellene can plausibly be derived from the neighbourhood, but this does not exclude the fact that the blend of race and custom which originally determined the cult of the Dodonaean Zeus was not typical of the rest of Greece.

It was from this direction in north-west Greece that the worship of Zeus spread to the Peloponnese at Olympia. There, as we have seen, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a Mediterranean earth goddess had been the first deity on the site, and had even given oracular responses by her own method of the priestess entering a cavern. In historic times the enquirers at Olympia were

answered by the omens derived from sacrifices, but we have suggested by a study of the traditions of the Melampodidai that the first prophets of Zeus were not very different from the Selloi and like them sought for the voice of the god in natural manifestations, such as the calls of birds.

Olympia's specialization as a centre of a great athletic festival developed it in a direction of its own. The oracular side of its activity became almost confined to enquiries about the chances of competitors, and its great importance lay in the Olympic games themselves. Hence it is not surprising that from the fifth century B.C. at least it did not share in Dodona's rivalry with Apollo. The Olympic oracle and that of Delphi were scarcely in competition, their major festivals were timed so as not to clash and the Iamids were prepared to connect their ancestry to the Pythian Apollo and associate their origin with a response of his. It is only in the early third century, when Delphi was controlled by the Aetolians, that we find some faint indications of relations between the prophets of Olympia and King Pyrrhus of Epirus.

Ammon was really quite independent in origin from Dodona and Olympia. It was a branch establishment from the great metropolitan centre of Egyptian Thebes. Of course the Greeks when they settled in Africa and came in contact with the worshippers of Amon-Ra were bound to identify him with one of their own deities. If the oracular aspect of the god had been the only consideration, he might well have been recognized as Apollo. But evidently the supremacy and fatherhood of Ammon must have been stressed by his interpreters, and this led to his identification with Zeus. Perhaps the process may have begun in Naucratis or some other trading-centre of the Delta and only later have been applied also in Cyrene. Then in the fifth century B.C., as we have seen, the process of identification went so far that a legend was created linking Dodona and Ammon as both founded from Egyptian Thebes. In its developed form this is first found in Herodotus, but possibly it may have been told first by Pindar, who had close acquaintance both with Epirus and Cyrene. This mythical association of the two chief oracles of Zeus will have helped to establish the acceptance of Ammon as a possible place of enquiry, and the distance and difficulty of the pilgrimage involved seems only to have stimulated curiosity. In any case from the latter years of the fifth

century the African oasis provided a third source of divine counsel in company with Delphi and Dodona.

There is no sign at Dodona itself of direct influence from Ammon in the religious cult, but at Olympia the worship of Hermes Parammon is evidently derived from North Africa. It may have come immediately from Cyrene which had close connections with Olympia where it had erected a treasury. But the Eleans also had direct contact with the oasis of Siwa as is proved by Pausanias' description of the inscribed record of their embassies which he had evidently seen there. While Dodona lacks such evidence of direct contact, it is the only oracle which is immediately linked with Ammon by legend. The story of the twin doves or twin priestesses who founded these two sanctuaries was already accepted by the prophetesses of Zeus in the time of Herodotus.

One factor at any rate may have tended to press Dodona and Ammon into friendly association and this was their common rivalry with Delphi. Dodona at least must have been fully conscious of this motive. We have seen how in the archaic period when the legends as known to classical Greece were being formed, Apollo had tended to intrude into such stories as that of the Argonauts and oust Dodona as their source of prophetic guidance. Again Deucalion, whose legend probably did not belong to either place, was annexed by Delphi as the ancestor of the human race under their oracular guidance and claimed by Dodona as their founder. This story also illustrates another point of rivalry between them. The Delphians admitted that Apollo came to Pytho comparatively late in time and they were compelled therefore to extend a series of earlier deities so as to stretch their claim for priority into the further past. The response to Deucalion at Delphi was traditionally given by Themis. Dodona on the other hand could usually claim to be the oldest of Greek oracles, and had always been the shrine of Zeus. The very fact that Dodona linked itself to the highest Greek god was its chief ground for asserting superiority over Delphi. The priests of Apollo could only reply by arguing that their god was the accredited spokesman of his father.

These disputes in legend and theology have their practical counterpart in the fact that in historic times Greek states such as Athens and Sparta can occasionally be seen consulting Dodona when for some reason Delphi was less convenient. In the early years of the Peloponnesian war the Pythian Apollo had declared

himself hostile to Athens and the Athenians also found themselves led to operate for strategic reasons in north-west Greece. It was natural then that Dodona became a place for dedication and consultation on their behalf. Again after Chaeronea, when 'the Pythia had Philippized', Athens found occasions to show respect to Zeus and Dione at a time when diplomacy suggested the wisdom of developing good relations with the kingdom of Epirus. These examples illustrate how, even though Athens may never have boycotted Delphi, it could at times pay her to exploit the uses of other alternatives, and Ammon also, besides Dodona, comes into use for her enquiries in these periods.

It would be interesting if the nature of our evidence were such as to indicate any specific line of policy or principles of conduct which were particularly advocated by the orders of Zeus. In the history of Delphi it is occasionally possible, though not without some element of conjecture, to detect a consistent thread running through various Apolline responses and therefore to conclude that this represents a deliberate purpose. But our literary sources on the oracles of Zeus are quite inadequate to show such guiding principles, if they existed. It cannot be said that Dodona contributed purposefully to any development in Greek history or philosophy. Ammon, strangely enough, may have done so without intention. The priest of the god when he greeted Alexander as the son of Zeus was probably treating him as Pharaoh without any intention that his words should be taken as an oracle, but in so far as they became the basis of the deification of Alexander, he influenced the whole development of Greek history as much as if he had meant to announce the will of Zeus.

In another way, too, but also somewhat accidentally, the oracles of Zeus found themselves in contrast to the Pythian Apollo. Dodona and Olympia, as we saw, had their origin in the observation and interpretation of natural omens. The rustling of the leaves and creaking of the branches of an oak tree, the calls of the doves which haunted it, even the peculiar features in the burnt offerings made to the god were all spontaneous happenings which did not require a human agent so much as an interpretation. But Apollo at his coming to Delphi brought with him traditional methods of ecstatic prophecy which may also have been able to fit with other local traditions of an earth goddess. The great reputation of Delphi was based on the power of the Pythia to act as the

unconscious mouthpiece of Apollo. There is no satisfactory evidence that Dodona or Olympia ever tried to adopt such a technique, and it would also in its very nature have been entirely foreign to the religious traditions of Egypt. Yet, strangely, as our authorities show, the methods of Delphi and Dodona for dealing with the ordinary enquirer tended ultimately to approximate to one another. At Delphi it may have been the need to cope with large numbers of enquirers consulting the oracle much more often than on the one day a month when the Pythia mounted the tripod which led the authorities to initiate the method of drawing lots by the use of beans so as to obtain a response. At Dodona the leaden tablets inscribed with questions point to some basically similar procedure. There the practical cause behind the change of method may have been the decay and death of the original oak tree, which enforced the introduction of a different system. But also there appears to be some element of deliberate imitation of their great rival, Delphi. For the replacement of the original Selloi by three priestesses is most easily explained on that hypothesis. Actually the change to a method of written question and drawing lots served also to bring Dodona nearer to the practices of Ammon, where presumably as at Thebes the question would be submitted to the god in writing. But if the change, as seems likely, was introduced towards the end of the sixth century, it was before the date when the authorities of Dodona would have heard of Ammon as a parallel institution.

The use of written questions on leaden tablets at Dodona has had one effect which makes it unique as an oracle-centre. It is the only one from which we now possess the evidence for a considerable number of actual enquiries. The literary traditions which tell of the consultation at Delphi are even more numerous, but many of them are unhistoric or at least highly suspicious in their content. The tablets of Dodona, though frequently difficult to read and interpret, are at least authentic. A few illustrate the official enquiries of states and communities. The vast majority are the genuine outpourings of anxious individuals writing with their own hand their earnest questions to Zeus. What answer they received we cannot tell. The occasional instances where a tablet is supposed to contain both an enquiry and a response are all very doubtful, to say the least. Probably if the replies were ever written down, the enquirers carried them away. While the voice of

the Pythia echoes through ancient literature, often distorted, but still persistent, the words of Zeus have scarcely come down to us in any recognizable form, but the impression of his oracles' activity on the pattern of Greek life and history can still be faintly traced.

APPENDIX I

A SELECTION OF ENQUIRIES MADE AT DODONA

The material found at Dodona in the form of enquiries incised on thin strips of lead is not of a kind which would greatly reward the effort of collecting it into a corpus. Many of the texts are very fragmentary or very difficult to read. Those originally published by Carapanos and now preserved in the National Museum in Athens have suffered a deterioration of the surface which would make it impossible to check and control the readings given by the original editor and Pomtow. The more recently found tablets now in the Museum in Jannina are mostly quite legible and it is evident that Evangelides published them very reliably in his progress reports in *Πρακτικά*. Some tablets still remain unpublished: also in West Berlin are a number of unpublished tablets which were acquired together with the material described by Kekulé.

What follows is simply meant to be a representative sample from the various publications. It includes all the known examples of public enquiries and a selection of the more typical private enquiries. All those that are reasonably intelligible have been included.

Public Enquiries

1. Enquirer. The city of Tarentum.

θεοῖ[s]. τύχαι ἀγαθᾶι. [ἐπερωτῇ]
 ῖα πόλις ῖα τῶν Ταραν[τίνων]
 τὸν Δία τὸν Ναῖον καὶ τ[ὸν] Διῶναν]
 περὶ παντυχίας καὶ π[ερὶ] . . . ἐν[?]
 ταχ . . . ρωὶ καὶ περὶ τῶν[. . .]

Pomtow 3. Carapanos 1 (Pl. XXXIV, 1 + XXXV, 4).

Pomtow: end of fourth or beginning of third century.

Hoffmann 1567. ll. 4 and 5 π[ερὶ] χωρίων,] τὰ χ[η]ρῶι.

'To the gods. With good fortune. The city of the Tarentines asks Zeus Naios and Dione concerning all good fortune and concerning. . . .'

2. Enquirer. The Corcyraeans.

θεός. ἐπικοινωνῶνται Κορκ[υραῖοι τῶι Δι τῶι Νάωι
καὶ τῶι Διώναι. τί] νι κα θεῶν [ἢ ἡρώων θύοντες καὶ
εὐχόμενοι κάλ]λιστα καὶ ἄ[ριστα καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς τὸν
ἔπειτα χρόνον] φοικέοιεν.

Pomtow 1. Carapanos 5 (Pl. XXXIV, 5).

On reverse Δ (large): i.e. δάμον or δαμόσιον (Pomtow).

Pomtow. 450-404 B.C.

'God. The Corcyraeans enquire of Zeus Naios and Dione, to what god or hero by making sacrifice and prayer they may dwell in the fairest and best way both now and in time to come.'

3. Enquirer. The Corcyraeans.

θεόν. τ[ύ]χαν [ά]γαθ[άν].
ἐπ[ι]κοινωνῶνται τοι Κ[ο]ρκυραῖοι τῶι Δι
Νάωι καὶ τῶι Δ[ι]ώναι τί]νι κα [θ]εῶν ἢ
ἡρώων θύον[τ]ες καὶ εὐχ[ό]μενοι
ὁμονοίεν ἐ[π]ὶ τῷγαθόν.

Pomtow. 2. Carapanos 4 (Pl. XXXIV, 4 + Pl. XXXIX, 7).

Pomtow dates ten or more years after no. 1. Late fifth century.

'God. Good Fortune. The Corcyraeans enquire from Zeus Naios and Dione to what god or hero by making sacrifice and prayer they may be of one mind for their good.'

4. Enquirer. The community of the Mondaeans.

Δι Νάωι καὶ Διώναι C
ἐπικοινωνᾶται Μον[δ]αιατᾶν τὸ κοινὸν πὲρ το(ῖ) [ἀρ-
γύροι τᾶς Θέμιστος αἱ ἀ(ν)εκτ[ό]ν ἐστι τᾶ Θέμι-
(σ)τι καὶ βέλτιον ἐ(σ)κιχρέμεν.

Pomtow 4. Carapanos uncatalogued (Pl. XXXIV, 3). Hoffmann 1557.

'The community of the Mondaeans enquires of Zeus Naios and Dione concerning the money of Themis whether it is permissible and better to put it on loan for Themis.'

[A difficult text. Presumably this is an enquiry from the Thes-
salian community of that name about investing the sacred
treasures of a goddess. The letter at the end of the first line is
unexplained.]

5. Enquirer. The city of Chaones.

ἀγαθὰ τύχα. αἰτεῖται ἡ πόλις ἡ τῶν Χαόνων
τὸν Δία τὸν Νάον καὶ τὰν Διώναν ἀνελεῖν εἰ λώι-
ον καὶ ἄμεινον καὶ συμφερώτερόν ἐστι τὸν ναόν
τὸν τᾶς Ἀθάνας τᾶς Πολιάδος ἀγχωρίξαντας
ποιεῖν.

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1952 (1955), 297, no. 1. Ἀρχ. Ἐφ. 1953/4
(1955) 99-103. L. Robert, *REG*, 1956, 134, dates late fourth or
early third century. *SEG*, 15 (1958), 397.

‘Good fortune. The city of the Chaones requests Zeus Naios
and Dione to answer if it is better and more good and more
expedient that they transfer the building of the temple of
Athena the city-goddess.’

6. Enquirer. The Corcyraeans and the Oricians.

θεός. ἐπικοινῶνται τοι Κορκυ-
ραῖοι καὶ τοι Ὀρίκιοι τῷ Διὶ τῷ Ναί-
[ω]ι καὶ τᾷ Διώναι τίνι κα [θ]εῶν ἢ ἡ-
ρώων [θ]υόντες καὶ εὐχ[ό]μενοι τὰ-
ν πόλιν [κ]άλλιστα οἰκεῦσι καὶ ἀσφα-
λέστατα καὶ εὐκαρπία σφιν καὶ πο-
λυκαρπία τελέ[θ]οι καὶ κατόνασις παν-
τὸς τῶγα[θ]οῦ καρποῦ.

Ergon, 1958 [1959] p. 93. *BCII*, 83 (1959), 669. Third century B.C.

‘God. The Corcyraeans and the Oricians enquire of Zeus
Naios and Dione by making sacrifice and prayer to what god
or hero they may dwell in the fairest and safest way and good
and plentiful fruits may thrive for them and enjoyment of
every fine fruit.’

7. Enquirer. The Dodonaean.

ἐπερωτῶντι Δωδωναῖοι τὸν
Δία καὶ τὰν Διώναν ἢ δι’ ἀνθρώ-
που τινὸς ἀκαθαρτίαν ὁ θεὸς
τὸν χειμῶνα παρέχει.

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1956, 171 (b). Ἔργον, 1955 (1956), 56. *SEG*, 19 (1963), 149, no. 427.

‘The Dodonaeans ask Zeus and Dione whether it is on account of the impurity of some human being that god sends the storm.’

[Note the feature of style that the Dodonaeans do not address their own god by his cult-title, Naïos.]

8. Enquirer. Unknown state of Epirus.

ἐπερωτῶντι τὸ κοινὸν τῶν . . .
ων Δία Νάϊον καὶ Διώναν μα . . .
τι αὐτοῖς συμπολιτεύουσι[ν ?
μετὰ Μολοσσῶν ἀσφαλῆ ἦι.

Pomtow 5. Carapanos 2 (Pl. XXXIV, 2).

Pomtow dates as much the latest of the Carapanos inscriptions, a century or two later than the majority (? late second to first century B.C.).

‘The community of the . . . ask Zeus Naïos and Dione whether . . . if they join the federation with the Molossi it will be safe for them.’

9. Enquirer. ‘The arbitrators.’

ἐπερωτῶντι τοὶ δαιτοὶ τὸν Διὰ τὸν Νάϊον καὶ [τὰν Διώναν
ἀναλίσκόντοισι τὰ . . . nominis χρήμα-]
τα ἰς τὸ πρυτανῆον τὰ παρ τᾶς πόλιος ἔλαβε δικαίως [ἑσσεῖται
αὐτοῖς λῶιον καὶ ἀμεινον.]
δαίτοισι ἀναδῶσαι ἰς τὸ πρυτανῆον δικαίως τοῦτο.

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1932, 52, no. 1. A. Wilhelm, *A.f.P.* XV (1953) 75 ff. J. and L. Robert, *REG*, LVI (1953), 146, no. 116. *SEG*, XII (1956), 397. Fourth century B.C.?

A puzzling inscription. For δαιτοὶ as κριταί, cf. Hsch. s.n. Wilhelm’s supplements are shown above. He supposed that the last line was the god’s answer. But this is very doubtful.

‘The arbitrators ask Zeus Naïos and [Dione whether if they spend the . . . money] on the council chamber which he has justly received from the city [it will be better and more good for them]. To the arbitrators. Justly spend this on the council chamber.’

*Private Enquiries**I. On general subjects*

1. Enquirer. Evandros and his wife.

θεοί. τύχαν ἀγαθάν. ἐπικοινωνῆται Εὐβαν-
 δρος καὶ ἡ γυνὴ τῷ Διὶ τῷ Νάωι καὶ τῷ Δι-
 ὶωναι τίνι κα φεῶν ἢ ἡρώων ἢ δαιμόνων
 εὐχόμενοι καὶ φύοντες λώιον καὶ ἄμεινο-
 ν πράσσοιεν καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ ἡ οἴκησις καὶ νῦν
 καὶ ἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον.

On reverse at right-angles in large letters Εὐαν: i.e. the first syllables of the enquirer's name. Note the husband and wife enquiring together.

Carapanos 3 (Pl. XXXIV, 3). Pomtow 8. Hoffmann 1582.

'Gods. Good Fortune. Evandros and his wife enquire of Zeus Naios and Dione by praying and sacrificing to what of the gods or heroes or supernatural powers they may fare better and more well, themselves and their household both now and for all time.'

2. Enquirer. Diognetus the son of Aristomedes, of Athens.

[θεός. τύχη] ἀγαθή.
 δέσποτα ἄναξ Ζεῦ Νάϊε καὶ Διώνη
 καὶ Δωδωναῖοι, αἰτεῖ ὑμᾶς
 καὶ ἱκετεύει Διόγνητος Ἀριστομη-
 δου Ἀθηναῖος δοῦναι αὐτῷ
 καὶ τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ εὖνοις ἅπασιν
 καὶ τεῖ μητρὶ Κλεαρέτει καὶ . . .

Carapanos 23 (Pl. XXXVIII, 3). Pomtow 23. Hoffmann 1596.
 An exceptionally emotional address in the form of a prayer.
 Whether it ended in an enquiry remains uncertain.

'God. Good fortune. O lord and master, Zeus Naios, and Dione, and Dodonaecans (misspelt), Diognetus, the son of Aristomedes, of Athens, asks and supplicates to give to him and to all who are well disposed to him and to his mother Clearete and . . .

3. Enquirer. Anonymous.

περὶ παντᾶσιν αὐτοῦ
καὶ γενεῶς καὶ γυναικῶ-
ς τίνι θεῶν εὐχόμενος
πράσσοιμι ἀγαθόν;

Evangelides, Ἑπειρωτικὰ χρονικά, 10 (1935) p. 252, no. 10. Chalcidic alphabet. Fifth century B.C. This irregularly shaped piece of lead appears never to have been folded. Was the question never presented?

‘Concerning my entire possession and my offspring and my wife by praying to what god may I fare well? [Spelling and grammar are irregular.]

4. Enquirer. Anonymous.

τίνι κε θεῶν εὐξάμενος πράξαι
ἢ ἐπὶ νόοι ἔχε;

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1952 (1955), 302, no. 8. *SEG*, 15 (1958), 102, no. 386. Beginning of fifth century (Evangelides).

‘By having prayed to what god is one to achieve what he has in mind?’

II. *On family questions*

5. Enquirer. Hermon.

Ἑρμῶν τίνα
κα θεῶν ποτθέμ-
ενος γενεᾶ ἴ-
οι γένοιτο ἐκ Κ-
ρεταίας ὀνά-
σιμος ποτ τᾶ ἐ-
άσσαι;

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1931, p. 89. no. 1 (who dates it to end of sixth or beginning of fifth century). Boustrophedon.

‘Hermon [asks] by joining to himself what god offspring may be born to him from Cretaia of advantage for his livelihood.’ [Ungrammatically and peculiarly expressed.]

6. Enquirer. Gerioton.

θεός. Γηριότον Δία ἐπ-
 ερωτηι περὶ γυναικὸς
 ἢ βέλτιον λαβόντι.

Evangelides, Ὑπερωτικά χρονικά, 10 (1935), p. 252, no. 37.

'God. Gerioton asks Zeus concerning a wife whether it is better for him to take one.'

7. Enquirer. Heracleides.

Ἡρακλ[ε]ίδας αἰτεῖ τὸν Δία καὶ τὴν Διώνην
 τύχην ἀγαθὴν καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐπερωτᾷ
 περὶ γεινεῖς ἢ ἔστα[ι] ἐκ τῆς γύναικός
 Α[ἰ]γλῆς τῆς νῦν ἔχει.

Carapanos 34+6 (Pl. XXXVIII, 4+XXXV, 1). Pomtow 24.

Hoffmann 1561 (who combined the fragments). *SIG*³, 1160.

Editors comment on the occurrence of the Doric form of the enquirer's name, but the traces of Ionic (misspelt) in the enquiry.

'Heracleidas requests Zeus and Dione for good fortune and asks the god concerning offspring whether there will be any from his wife Aigle whom he has now.'

8. Enquirer. Callicrates.

Καλλικράτης ἐπερωτᾷ τὸν θε-
 ὸν ἢ ἔσται μοι γενεὰ ἀπὸ τᾶς Νίκης
 τῆς γυναικὸς ἣς ἔχει συμμένο-
 ντι καὶ τίνι [θ]εῶν εὐχομένῳ.

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1955, 171a. *BCH*, 80 (1956), 299.

SEG, 19 (1963), 149, no. 426, Ἔργον 1955 (1950), 56.

'Callicrates asks the god whether I will have offspring from Nike the wife whom I have by remaining with her and praying to which of the gods.'

A somewhat confused double question with a mixture of third and first person.

9. Enquirer. Anaxippus.

θεός. τύχα ἀγαθή. Ἀνάξιππος τὸν Δία τ-
ὸν Νάον καὶ τὰν Διώναν ἐπερωτᾷ περὶ ἐρ-
σεντέρας γενεᾶς ἀπὸ Φιλίστας τᾶς γυναι-
κός, τίνοι κα θεῶν εὐχόμενος πράξαιμι
λῶιστα καὶ ἄριστα.

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1956 [1961], 155.

‘God. Good fortune. Anaxippus asks Zeus Naos and Dione concerning male offspring from Philista his wife, by praying to what of the gods shall I fare best and most well?’

Again the first and third persons are confused.

10. Enquirer. Lykkidas.

αἱ τυχαία μοι ἅ ἐπι-
τροπεία τὰν ἔχω
γαμῶν Λυκκίδας;

Evangelides, Ἑπειρωτικά χρονικά, 10 (1935) p. 252, no. 36.

‘If the guardianship will be fortunate to me which I Lykkidas have by marrying.’

Apparently Lykkidas was marrying a female relative and undertaking the guardianship of her property. He appears to use τυχαῖος as meaning ‘lucky’; a usage not recognized in LS.

11. Enquirer. Lysanias

ἐρωτῇ Λυσα-
νίας Δία Νάϊον
καὶ Δηῶναν ἥ οὐ-
κ ἔστι ἐξ αὐτοῦ
τὸ παιδάριον
ὃ Ἀννύλα κύει.

Reverse. Λυ (i.e. initial letters of Lysanias).

Carapanos 11 (Pl. XXXVI, 2). Pomtow 11. Hoffmann 1565. *SIG*³, 1163 (where it is dated to the second century B.C.).

‘Lysanias asks Zeus Naios and Deona (sic) whether the child is not from him with which Annyla is pregnant.’

III. *On health*

12. Enquirer. An Ambraciote, name lost.

[ἐπικοινῆται . . .]
 ης Ἀμβρακιάτ[ης]
 Διὶ Νάῳ καὶ Δη[ώνῳ]
 περὶ ὑγείας αὐτοῦ [καὶ]
 τῶν ὑπαρχόντων καὶ [νῦν]
 καὶ εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα [χρ-]
 όνον, τίνας θεῶν [1-]
 λασκόμενος λώϊον
 καὶ ἄμεινον πρά[σσοι.]

Carapanos 13 (Pl. XXXVI, 5). Pomtow 16. Hoffmann 1564.

‘ . . . es of Ambracia [enquires of] Zeus Naos and Deona concerning his health and his present circumstances both now and for the future by appeasing which gods will he fare better and more well.’

13. Enquirer. Leontios.

θεός. τύχα. ἱστορεῖ Λεόντιος περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ
 Λεόντος ἥ ἐσσεῖται ὑγεία τοῦ νοσήμα-
 τος τοῦ ἐπιμ . . . του ὃ λάζεται νιν.

On reverse Λεοντίου. Πε (i.e. the enquirer's name and perhaps the first letters of a reference to the subject).

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1931, p. 89. no. 2 (who dates it to the fourth to third century). A. Wilhelm *A.f.P.* XV (1953), 73 conjectures ἐπὶ [μας]τοῦ in the third line.

‘God. Luck. Leontios consults concerning his son Leon whether there will be recovery from the disease on his breast which seizes him.’

14. Enquirer. Thrasyboulos

Θ[ρ]ασύβουλος τίνι κα θεῶν θύσ[ας]
 καὶ ἡιλαζάμενος τὸς ὀπτιλ[ος]
 ὑγιέστερος γένοιτο;

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1932, p. 59. no. 3

‘ . . . Thrasyboulos by sacrificing and appeasing which god will he become healthier as to his eyes?’

15. Enquirer. Nicocrateia.

ἱστορεῖ Νικοκράτ[ει]α τίνοι θεῶν θύουσα
 λώιον καὶ ἄμεινον πρᾶσσοι καὶ τᾷς νόσου
 παύσα(ι)το.

Carapanos 34+6 (Pl. XXXVIII, 4 + XXXV, 1 reverses).
 Pomtow 22.

Hoffmann 1561 B (who combined the fragments), *SIG*³, 1161.

Note a woman enquiring alone.

‘Nicocrateia consults by sacrificing to which of the gods she may fare better and more well and may cease from her illness.’

IV. *On questions of business*

16. Enquirer. Socrates.

τῶι Δι τῶι Νά]ωι καὶ τᾷ Διώναι Σωκράτης ἐπικοι-
 νῆται· τί κα] ἐργαζόμενος λώιον καὶ ἄμεινον
 πρᾶσσοι αὐτ]ὸς καὶ αὐτῶι καὶ γενεᾷ.

Carapanos. 17 (Pl. XXXV, 2). Pomtow 10.

‘Socrates enquires of Zeus Naios and Dione by engaging in what work he may do better and more well for himself and his family.’

17. Enquirer. Cleotas.

ἐρουτᾷ Κλεούται τὸν Δία καὶ τὰν
 Διώναν, αἷ ἔστι αὐτοῖ προβατεύοντι
 ὄναιον καὶ ὠφέλιμον.

Reverse. περ προβατείας (i.e. the subject) KT (i.e. an abbreviation of the name) and E (probably a serial number).

Carapanos 21 (Pl. XXXVIII, 1). Pomtow 15. Hoffmann 1559.
*SIG*³, 1165.

‘Cleotas asks Zeus and Dione if it is better and profitable for him to keep sheep.’

[The enquirer was not accustomed to writing. For ὄναιον, cf. Hsch. ὄναιον. ἄρειον.]

18. Enquirer. Phainylos.

θεός. τύχαι ἀγαθᾶι. Φαινύλῳι θεμιστεύει ὁ
θεὸς τὰμ πατρῷαν τέχνην ἐργάζεσθαι, ἀλιεύεσθαι
καὶ λῶιον καὶ ἄμεινον πράξειν;

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1932, p. 52, no. 2. (fourth century).

‘God. For good fortune. Does the god give an oracle to Phainylos to work at his ancestral trade, to be a fisherman, and he will fare better and more well?’

This might be taken grammatically as a statement and therefore interpreted as an oracular response. But the initial invocation makes it more likely to be an oddly framed enquiry.

19. Enquirer. Anonymous.

τύχα ἀγαθά. ἥ τυγχάνοιμι καὶ ἐμπορευόμενος
ὄπῃ καὶ δοκῇ σύμφορον ἔμειν, καὶ ἄγων, τῇ καὶ δοκῇ
ἀμάται τέχνηι χρεόμενος;

Carapanos 18 (Pl. XXXVII, 4). Pomtow 17. Hoffmann 1568 (who conjectures that the enquirer was a Rhodian or a member of a Rhodian colony by the dialect). *SIG*³, 1166 (as above).

‘Good fortune. Whether by trading I can have such fortune as seems profitable to me, and by exporting, where it seems good with guileless skill?’

20. Enquirer. Anonymous.

ἥ αὐτὸς πεπραμένος τὰν ἐ(μ) πόλι οἰκίαν καὶ τὸ χωρί-
ον, βέλτιόν μοι κ’ εἴη καὶ πολυωφελέ(σ)τε(ρ)ον;

Carapanos 15 (Pl. XXXVII, 1). Pomtow 19. *SIG*³, 1164.

‘Whether if I have acquired the house in town and the plot of land, it would be better and more profitable for me?’

21. Enquirer. Alcinoos.

θεός. τύχη. ἐπικοινωνῇται Ἀλκίνοος τῷ
Διὶ τῷ Νάῳι καὶ τῷ Διώναι εἰ λ[ώιον]
καὶ] ἄμεινον Νικέαι κατασκευάζ[ειν]
τὸ ἐργαστήριον.

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1932, p. 59, no. 5 (fourth century).

'God. Fortune. Alcinoos enquires of Zeus Naios and Dione whether it would be better and more good for Niceas to construct the workshop.'

Apparently an enquiry on behalf of a third party.

22. Enquirer. Parmenidas.

ἀγαθᾷ τύχα[ι].
ἐπικοινῆται Παρμενίδ-
ας τῷ Δι τῷ Νάω καὶ ταῖ
Διώναι λῶον καὶ ἄμει-
νον οἴκοι μένοντι.

Evangelides, Ἑπειρωτικά χρονικά, 10 (1935) p. 252, no. 13. (fifth to fourth century).

'For good fortune. Parmenidas enquires of Zeus Naios and Dione will it be better and more good for him staying at home.'

23. Enquirer. Anonymous.

θεός. Ζεῦ, Διώνη, ἡ ἀπιδών
εἰς Ἀλύζεαν βέλτιον
πρήξει;

Reverse. Two monograms, perhaps intended to distinguish the enquiry, also:

αὐτεῖ οἰκεῖ-
ν καὶ ἐξέχουσ-
θαι.

Also seven fragmentary lines of another enquiry.

Evangelides, Πρακτικά 1952 (1955), 300, nos. 3 and 4.

SEG, 15 (1958), 163, no. 393, and 394 a and b. Evangelides takes the first sentence on the reverse to be the answer to the question on the recto. Fifth to fourth century.

'God. O Zeus, Dione, will he fare better by departing to to Alyzca.'

'To dwell there and hold on.'

24. Enquirer. Aischylinos.

θεός. τύχη. εἰρω-
 τᾶι: τὸν Δία τὸν
 Νάιον καὶ τὴν Διώ-
 νην Αἰσχυλῖνος: εἰ
 μὴ αὐτῷ ἄμενον
 πλὴν ἐς Ἀδρίαν
 ἐς Τισάτες.

On the reverse μὴ πε.

Evangelides, *Ἑπειρωτικά χρονικά*, 10 (1935), p. 252, no. 9 (who takes the inscription on the reverse as a response: I would take it as an abbreviation of the question).

‘God. Fortune. Aischylinos asks Zeus Naios and Dione whether it would not be better for him to sail to Adria to the Tisates.’

25. Enquirer. Arizelos.

θεοί. τύχη ἀγαθή.
 Ἀρίζηλος ἐπανερωτᾷ τὸν θεὸν
 ὃ τι δρῶν ἢ ποιῶν λώιον καὶ ἄμενον
 ἔσται αὐτῷ καὶ χρημάτων κτῆσις ἀγαθὴ ἔσται.

Evangelides, *Πρακτικά*, 1952 (1955), 505, no. 21, *SEG*, 15 (1958), 105, no. 405 (a).

‘Gods. Good fortune. Arizelos asks the god by making or doing what thing it will be better and more good for him and he will have a good possession of property.’

V. *On stolen property*

26. Enquirer. Uncertain, either Aristocles, the slave’s owner or one of those accused of kidnapping him.

[θ]εός, τύχα ἀγαθὰ.—οὐκ ἀνδροποδίζατο Ἀρχωνίδας
 τὸν Ἀριστοκλέος ἄοζον οὐδὲ Ἀρχέβιος ὁ Ἀρχωνίδα υ-
 ἰός οὐδὲ Σώσανδρος ὁ Ἀρχωνίδα δοῦλος τόκα ἑὼν
 ἢ τὰς γυναικός;

Doric dialect. Fifth century.

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1952 (1953), p. 300, no. 2. *SEG*, 15 (1958), 102, no. 385.

‘God. Good fortune. Did Archonidas not kidnap the servant of Aristocles nor Archebios the son of Archonidas kidnap him nor Sosandros who was once the slave of him or of his wife?’

27. Enquirer. Agis.

ἐπερῶται Ἄγις Δία Νᾶον [καὶ Διώναν]
 ὑπὲρ τῶν στρωμάτων κ[αὶ τῶν προσ-]
 κεφαλαίων, τὰ ἀπώλολ[εν αὐτός]
 ἢ τῶν ἔξωθεν τις ἂν ἔκ[λεψε].

Reverse. Ἄγ—i.e. index initials. B (? serial number, cf. Robert, *Hermes*, 18, 467).

Carapanos 10 (Pl. XXXVI, 1). Pomtow 12. Hoffmann 1586.

‘Agis asks Zeus Naos and Dione about the blankets and the pillows which he has lost whether some one from outside may have stolen them.’

28. Enquirer. Satyros.

ἄγαθᾶι τύχαι. ἐπικοινῆται Σάτυρος τῷ Διὶ τῷ Ναίῳ
 καὶ τῇ Διώνῃ οὐκ ἀνεθέθη ὁ Σατύρου Σκύθος. ἐν Ἑλέῃ
 ἂν τὸν κέλητα τὸν Δωριλάου ὁ καὶ Ἀκτίου ἀπέτιλε.

Evangelides, Πρακτικά, 1955, 171. Ἔργον, 1955 (1956), 56.

SEG, 19, (1963), 150, no. 428. (where σκύφος is suggested in place of Σκύθος).

‘For good fortune. Satyros consults Zeus Naios and Dione was the Scythian (horse?) of Satyros not packed up; in Elea he would have stripped the hide off the racing steed of Dorilaus, alias Actius.’

[This is apparently a literal translation of an enquiry which seems to be complete, but is very obscure, perhaps because it is written in the jargon of the racing stables.]

29. Enquirer. Anonymous.

ἔκλεψε Δορκίλος τὸ λᾶκος;

Evangelides, πρακτικά, 1955, 171. Ἔργον, 1955 (1956), 56.

SEG, 19 (1963), 150, no. 429.

‘Did Dorkilos steal the cloth?’

Presumably, like no. 18 above, this is an enquiry, not a statement.

APPENDIX II

GREEK DEDICATIONS AT DODONA

The dedications excavated from the sacred precinct at Dodona are distributed in a number of museums: the Carapanos collection in the National Museum, Athens, together with the more recent accessions; the Staatliche Museum in West Berlin; the Louvre; and the British Museum. The chief publications in which they are described are:

- CARAPANOS, C., *Dodone et ses ruines*, 1878;
CHARBONNEAUX, J. *Les Bronzes Grecs*, 1958;
DE RIDDER, A., *Musée du Louvre*, 1913;
KEKULÉ VON STRADONITZ, H. F. R. and WINNEFELD, H. *Bronzen aus Dodona* (1909);
LAMB, W., *Greek and Roman Bronzes*, 1929;
NEUGEBAUER, K. A., *Antike Bronze-statuetten*, 1921;
NEUGEBAUER-BLÜMEL, *Die Griechische Bronzen der klassischen Zeit* (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 1951);
STAIS, V., *Marbres et Bronzes de Musée Nationale*, 1907.
WALTERS, H. B. *British Museum. Select Bronzes in the Departments of Antiquities*, 1915;

and the periodicals *Ἑπειρωτικά Χρονικά*, *Πρακτικά* and *Ἔργον*. The objects mentioned below are, unless otherwise stated, of bronze and, except for the statuettes of later periods, many of them were originally attached as ornaments to tripods, craters, or other pieces of furniture.

750-700 B.C.

After the Dark Ages the first datable material comes from the second half of the eighth century B.C. It is not plentiful, but suggests that the oracle was receiving recognition from outside Epirus. The chief examples are fibulae (Πρ. 1931, p. 85, fig. 2, 1 and p. 86, fig. 3), a male standing figure in the act of throwing

(Zeus thundering?) from a hammered tripod (Carapanos, p. 32, no. 16; cf. S. Benton, *BSA*, 35 (1938), p. 85), two geometric warriors (Ἡπ. Χρ. 1935, p. 212 and Ἐργον, 1955, p. 58), a small geometric horse (Ἐργον, 1958, p. 94), and a shield fragment of Cretan type (Kunze, *Kretische Bronze-reliefs*, pl. 51 d).

700-600 B.C.

There is relatively quite a shortage of datable objects of importance for this century. If this can be taken as evidence, the oracle did not develop, but actually declined. The chief examples are a Daedalic head with peruque (Carapanos, pl. 31, no. 5) and a bronze plaque with engraved design of the lower half of a centaur (Carapanos, p. 36, no. 27; cf. Kunze, *op. cit.*, p. 253).

600-500 B.C.

Judging by the large number of dedications found, this century was the most prosperous of the oracle. Also the first inscribed bronzes occur. The chief examples are:

1. Seated figure of bearded man, robed in parallel folds, throne missing (Zeus?). h. 0.72 m. Πρ. 1954, p. 190, figs. 2 and 3 (probably Laconian, mid-sixth century).
2. Standing Apollo with bow, bearing inscription in Corinthian alphabet—ΤΟΙ ΔΙ ΕΤΥΜΟΚΛΕΔΑΣ ΑΝΕΘΕΚΕ. Louvre 108. h. p. 106 m. De Ridder, I, p. 22. Lamb, p. 88. Charbonneaux, p. 73 (c. 525 B.C.).
3. Ithyphallic satyr in dancing pose. Nat. Mus. 22. h. 0.20 m. Carapanos, p. 31, no. 1. Lamb, p. 97.
4. Boy horseman from the neck of a crater. Nat. Mus. 36. Carapanos, p. 32, no. 11. Lamb, p. 97.
5. Rider. Nat. Mus. 27. Carapanos, p. 31, no. 6. Lamb, p. 97. To be joined with the horse, Louvre 148. De Ridder, I, p. 29. Charbonneaux, p. 23 (Corinthian, latter half of sixth century).
6. Horseman. Nat. Mus. 16547. Found in 1956. Peloponnesian, c. 550 B.C.
7. Standing hoplite. Nat. Mus. 15174. h. 0.135 m. For style cf. Lamb, pl. 28 b. Peloponnesian, c. 550-530 B.C.
8. Striding naked warrior. Πρ. 1952, p. 297. Laconian, c. 530 B.C.
9. Hoplite with shield. Berlin 7470. h. 0.128 m. Kekulé, pp. 13 ff. Neugebauer-Blümel (1951), p. 56 (Magna Graecia, just before 500 B.C.).

10. Hoplite holding sword, but with shield missing. Berlin. h. 0.81 m. Kekulé, pp. 13 ff. (north Peloponnesian).
11. Girl runner. Nat. Mus. 24. h. 0.12 m. Carapanos, p. 31, no. 4. Lamb, pp. 97/98. Charbonneaux, p. 69. Laconian (?), c. 530 B.C.
12. Woman playing double flute. Nat. Mus. no. 25. h. 0.12 m. Carapanos, p. 31, no. 2. Lamb, p. 97. Charbonneaux, p. 84. Peloponnesian.
13. Komast reclining. 0.078 m. long. h. 0.042 m. *Πρ.* 1953, p. 159 and 162 fig. 3. Laconian (?), mid-sixth century.
14. Komast reclining. B.M. 1954, no. 10, 18, 1. 0.10 m. long. *B.M. Quarterly*, XX (1955/6), pp. 36/37. P. R. Franke, *Die antiken Münzen von Epiros*, I, p. 27 (Wiesbaden, 1961). Peloponnesian, c. 500 B.C.
15. Goat. Berlin 10584. h. 0.107 m. Kekule, pp. 1 and 43. Lamb, p. 105.
16. Goat. Louvre 4234. Charbonneaux, pl. XIX, e. 2nd half of sixth century.
17. Dish with winged horses on handles. Berlin 10588. The only complete specimen of a type known from fragments elsewhere. Kekulé, pp. 32 ff. Lamb, p. 136. Charbonneaux, p. 48. Corinthian, latter half of sixth century.
Also winged horses of similar style (Nat. Mus. Athens, Carapanos, p. 37, No. 2 and Louvre, De Ridder, 1, 29).
18. Rock crystal engraved with Chimacra (*Πρ.* 1954, p. 192 fig. 8; cf. Boardman, *Island Gems*, p. 126, f. 24).

500–400 B.C.

The dedications are not quite as numerous as in the sixth century, but are often of high quality. The chief examples are:

1. Zeus with thunderbolt standing. Nat. Mus. 31. h. 0.11 m. Carapanos, p. 32, no. 13.
2. Zeus wielding thunderbolt. Berlin 10561. h. 0.135 m. Kekulé, pp. 6 ff. (Aeginetan). Neugebauer (1921), p. 55 Argive. Lamb, p. 149. Neugebauer–Blümel (1951), pp. 3 ff. Corinthian, to be dated to the 'seventies of the fifth century.
3. Zeus thundering (the thunderbolt missing). Louvre 158. h. 0.189 m. De Ridder, 1, 30. Charbonneaux, p. 90 and pl. XXII, 1. Peloponnesian, c. 450 B.C.
4. Zeus with thunderbolt. Nat. Mus. 16545. h. 0.115 m. *Πρ.* 1956, p. 154. Corinthian (?), c. 450 B.C.

5. Athena standing and looking down at both arms held in front: some object is missing. Nat. Mus. 23. h. 0.12 m. Carapanos, p. 32, no. 7.
6. Seated maenad. Nat. Mus. h. 0.10 m. Carapanos, p. 33, no. 17 Attic, c. 440 B.C.
7. Seated maenad. Berlin 10582. h. 0.106 m. Kekulé, pp. 20 ff. Attic. Lamb, pp. 169-70, South Italian. Neugebauer-Blümel (1951), p. 60 (Tarentine), c. 400 B.C.
8. Head of Zeus Ammon. Louvre 4235. (Cf. *supra*, p. 208.) c. 450 B.C.
9. Gold lion. 0.033 m. long. h. 0.025 m. Пр. 1955, p. 170. Identified by P. Amandry as of fifth-century Persian style. A Persian dedication is unlikely: more probably a Greek dedication from Persian spoil.
10. Miniature tripod. Nat. Mus. 450. h. 0.05 m. Carapanos, p. 40, no. 3. Inscribed in Ionic alphabet ΤΕΡΨΙΚΛΗΣ ΤΩΙ ΔΙ ΝΑΙΩΙ ΡΑΥΩΙΔΟΣ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕ.
11. Mesomphalic patera with pierced rim. Nat. Mus. Diameter 0.22 m. Carapanos, p. 41, no. 6. Inscribed in Ionic alphabet ΔΩΡΟΒΙΟΣ ΔΙΙ ΝΑΟΙ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕ Α ΔΙΟΠΕΘΗΣ ΕΥ ΖΑΤΟ.
12. Silver plate embossed with Zeus holding thunderbolt. Пр. 1952, p. 297. Early fifth century.

400-300 B.C.

The fourth century shows a considerable fall in the number of bronze dedications extant, but this may rather be due to a change in fashion or to their greater accessibility to plunderers than to any decline in the oracle's activity.

1. Standing figure of Zeus or Poseidon. Berlin 10581. h. 0.259 m. Kekulé p. 24. Lamb, p. 172. Neugebauer-Blümel (1951) p. 44. Charbonneaux, p. 95 Attic, related to Leochares, second half of fourth century.
2. Shoulder pieces from a corslet with embossed scenes, Nat. Mus. 84, Carapanos, p. 33, no. 2 ff., and Пр. 1930, p. 67, fig. 10, early fourth century.
3. Cheek-piece of helmet with embossed scene of fallen and standing warriors. Nat. Mus. 166. Carapanos, p. 33, no. 1. Corinthian (?), early fourth century.
4. Thin plaque embossed with Nike in chariot. Пр. 1952, p. 29.
5. Gilt bronze plaque embossed with Ganymede and large eagle. Пр. 1931, p. 83.

6. Ring with snake's head. Inscribed Αἰσχρων Δι Ναιῶι δῶρον
ἔστράτου ἀνέθηκεν. Diameter 0.008 m. P. M. Fraser, *JHS.*
1954, p. 57.

After 300 B.C.

There is a complete slump in finds. The chief examples are:

1. Comic actor with both arms raised and in fantastic striding pose. Nat. Mus. h. 0.10 m. Carapanos, p. 32, no. 14.
2. Small statuette of man with cloak and object in right hand (now lost). Nat. Mus. 15158.
3. Iron strigil with inscription in hexameters (cf. p. 122, *supra*).

Besides these objects a number of other bronzes which came from north-west Greece or Albania may probably have been found originally at Dodona:

1. Canephoros (a support for a vase), wearing a long belted dress with elaborate ornamental patterns and shoes. She holds an oinochoe in her right hand and a patera in her left. Louvre 140. h. 0.28 m. Provenience, Albania. She may be a priestess. De Ridder, I, 27. Charbonneaux, p. 77 and pl. XX, 1.
2. Girl runner. B.M. 208. h. 0.11 m. From Prisrend (?), Albania, 1876. Seems to be of the same subject as the girl runner of the sixth century (no. 11 above). Lamb, p. 98. Lauglotz, p. 94 (Spartan). Late sixth century.
3. Artemis, striding boldly with traces of bow in left hand and fingers of right hand bent to pull the string. Berlin. h. 0.12 m. Kekulé, p. 32. Purchased in 1886.
4. Eagle. Berlin, no. 10590. h. 0.35 m. Found in north Epirus and bought in 1904. One of the most brilliant representations of a bird in Greek art. Kekulé, p. 45. Neugebauer-Blümel (1957), p. 51 (before 450 B.C.).

The Paramythia bronzes, found in 1792 and 1796, and originally in the Payne Knight collection, all of late fourth century or Hellenistic date, may have come from Dodona. See *British Museum, Select Bronzes*, Plates XVIII ff., statuettes of Apollo, Poseidon, Zeus, Zeus Serapis, and Dione or Aphrodite.

It can be presumed that objects of this sort found inside the sacred precinct at Dodona were dedications and therefore that they give an approximate indication of the period of activity of the oracle and the degree of its veneration. It could not safely be assumed that all dedications came from enquirers. But as

Dodona was such an out-of-the-way centre and many of these gifts were manufactured at some considerable distance, it is more likely that they were brought or sent by grateful enquirers than that they can be otherwise accounted for. In particular, Dodona until late in its history had no athletic games or festival to attract visitors. It is notable that, though the objects are often of conventional types known elsewhere, there are a number with obviously local appropriateness: the statues of Zeus thundering and the more exotic types of Zeus Ammon and Zeus Serapis. Dionysos and his cult may be indicated by the Satyr and the maenads. Even the female runners may have a special appropriateness if they are the dedications of Epirote maidens who had won victories at Olympia.

APPENDIX III

THE HYPERBOREAN GIFTS

(For a select bibliography, see page 286)

In one curious connection Dodona has a link with Delos and the far north which must be mentioned even though it remains very mysterious. This is the part which Dodona played in the transmission of the Hyperborean gifts to Delos. They are not associated with the oracle, as such, but as an activity of the Dodonaean priesthood they call for some discussion.

These offerings are first recorded in Herodotus, where he is discussing the Hyperboreans as a people. After explaining that the Scythians have no traditions about them, though they were mentioned in the works of Hesiod and in *'the Epigoni'*, Herodotus says that the greatest number of stories about them are found among the Delians (4, 32 ff.). 'They say that sacred objects bound in wheaten straw come to the Scythians carried from the Hyperboreans, and from the Scythians the neighbouring peoples each receiving them in constant succession fetch them westward at the farthest to the Adriatic and from there, as they are sent ahead southward, the men of Dodona are the first of the Greeks to receive them and from them they go down to the Malian gulf and cross to Euboea, and city sends them to city as far as Carystus. But after that place they leave out Andros. For the Carystians are those who take them to Tenos and the Tenians to Delos. The Delians tell that this is the way in which the sacred objects now

reach Delos, but first of all the Hyperboreans sent two maidens carrying the objects, whom the Delians name Hyperoche and Laodice, and together with them the Hyperboreans for their protection sent five men of their citizens to act as escorts whom the Delians now call the Perferes ("Transmitters") and pay them great honours.' But because those sent with the gifts did not return, the Hyperboreans had substituted the method of transmission from state to state. Herodotus ends by describing where the tombs of these Hyperborean maidens were situated in the Delian sanctuary near the temple of Artemis, and mentions the ritual in their honour which the girls and boys of Delos observed. Also he adds that even before Hyperoche and Laodice two other maidens from the Hyperboreans, Arge and Opis, had come with the gods themselves (presumably Apollo and Artemis) to Delos. The later pair, as he now explains, were delivering a tribute to Eileithyia, the goddess of child-birth in thanks for a quick delivery. So it seems that the earliest sacred objects brought from the Hyperboreans were not a dedication to Apollo, the chief god of Delos, but to Eileithyia. Yet Herodotus does not make it clear whose quick delivery was the occasion for the thank-offering. It appears to be the fulfilment of a Hyperborean vow and may be meant to be in thankfulness for the birth of Apollo himself. Arge and Opis, like the later pair of Hyperborean maidens had tombs on Delos with a cult recognized not merely by the Delians, but also by the islanders generally and the Ionians.

If in this confusing narrative we concentrate first on the traditional route of the offerings, much the same account is repeated nearly two centuries later in Callimachus' hymn (4, 278 ff. and fr. 186 (*Actia*)). The Pelasgians at Dodona whom he describes with an allusive phrase as 'earth-bedded servants of the unsilent cauldron' are much the first to receive the gifts as they come from afar, and they follow the same route to the Malian Gulf, Euboea, and then by sea to Delos. The account is not merely borrowed from Herodotus because Callimachus differs in describing the maidens—they are three, not two and are named 'Upis, Loxo and Hecaerge, daughters of Boreas'. Also the sacred objects transmitted are not wrapped in wheaten straw, but are 'straw and holy clusters of wheaten ears'. Callimachus appears to think of them as an offering of first-fruits, while Herodotus had left it entirely vague what the offering itself was. Also there is

probably a significant, though minor, difference in the account of the route. Callimachus describes the gifts as though transmitted direct from Euboea to Delos without touching at any of the other Cyclades. This might be a mere abbreviation in his account, but, as we shall see, it corresponds to other evidence.

A very different route is known only from Pausanias (1, 31, 2). When describing the temple of Apollo at Prasiae in East Attica, he says: 'There the offerings of the Hyperboreans are said to go. The Hyperboreans deliver them to the Arimaspi, and the Arimaspi to the Issedones: from them the Scythians bring them to Sinope and from there they are carried from Greek to Greek as far as Prasiae. The Athenians then are there who take them to Delos. The first fruits are hidden in wheaten straw and are known to nobody.' This account differs entirely from Herodotus, except for the single feature that the gifts, as in his description, are a mysterious parcel hidden in straw. But instead of coming via the Adriatic and Dodona, they come via the Black Sea and Sinope. Also the Athenians take them direct from Attica to Delos, cutting out both Euboea and the intervening Cyclades.

In this curious muddle of legends and cult-practices it would be tempting to treat the whole story as fictitious, but, as Treheux has pointed out, we have preserved in the Delian inscriptions several contemporary records of the arrival of the gifts. They are entered as 'sacred objects from the Hyperboreans' under the years 372/1 B.C. and about 350 B.C., while in 247 B.C. there occurs a reference to 'those of the Carystians who bring the sacred objects'. Here the Carystians not merely have by-passed Andros, as Herodotus describes, but have come all the way to Delos direct. This variation in the route could be reconciled with the account of Callimachus, writing slightly earlier in the same century. He omitted Tenos and so seems to indicate a single direct voyage from Euboea.

Therefore in both literary and epigraphic sources we find evidence for the intermittent sending of offerings to Delos from a period at least somewhat earlier than when Herodotus wrote in the mid-fifth century down to a date in the latter half of the third century, which may not have been the end of the practice, if Pausanias refers to still later sendings. Both in Herodotus' time and also in the third century Dodona was the first stage in the transmission through Greek lands.

Where did the offerings come from? The Hyperboreans are a

highly mysterious people. Scholarly opinion, which was for long inclined to be sceptical about the ancient derivation, and tried to substitute other etymologies, is tending to return to the view that their name, as the Greeks believed, meant 'people who live beyond the north wind'. (Cf. for a recent philological discussion, A. J. van Windekens, *Rhein. Mus.* 100 (1957), 164 ff.). If so, they were probably originally a myth; a fabulous people dwelling in a land at the end of the earth and enjoying a blessed existence. Apollo was their special deity, who visited them in the three months of winter, as the Delphians believed. They do not appear in Homer, where the Aethiopes—'the Burnt-faces'—living in the far East, are a similar mythical people at the ends of the earth visited by the gods. The folk 'beyond the north wind' were first given something like a real setting when in the third quarter of the seventh century B.C. Aristaeas of Proconessus, who beneath layers of legendary tales was an actual person, went on a distant exploration through Scythia to the further beyond. His intention may have been to reach the fabulous Hyperboreans. If so, he failed and frankly admitted the fact, but he placed them on the outer sea beyond the Arimaspi, the one-eyed dwarfs who fought with the griffons, next to whose land were the Issedones whom Aristaeas himself had reached. The explorations and tales of the further beyond were embodied by Aristaeas in a hexameter poem, which served to establish a topographical sequence of the Scythians, Issedones, Arimaspi and Hyperboreans, as we find it reproduced in Pausanias' scheme of the route taken by the sacred gifts. But apart from giving a much richer reality to the notion of the Hyperboreans, he did little to place them more precisely in a geographical direction, since his poem was produced before the Greeks had developed the proper terminology.

It is quite probable that Aristaeas in his exploration had penetrated far enough into central Asia to hear a garbled description of the civilized wonders of China. There can, however, be no serious likelihood that the mysterious parcels wrapped in straw which reached Delos from Dodona were really gifts from the Chinese. If we follow back along Herodotus' route from Dodona, we find it leads northwards up the Adriatic and then at some unspecified place turns inland and eastwards. This might seem to point to some source in the Balkan hinterland towards the lower Danube basin. It is nearly forty years since Seltman suggested that

the gifts came from some settlement of half-Greek origin situated inland from the colony of Istros. There is literary and archaeological evidence in support of the existence of such communities on the Danube more than a hundred miles from its mouth in the mid-sixth century B.C. Such colonists would have come originally from Miletus and recognize Apollo as their patron-god. Hence it would not be surprising if they had a traditional practice of sending gifts to Delos.

But, as Seltman admits, the natural route from such an up-river settlement would have been downstream to Istros and then through the Black Sea and the Propontis to Delos. Certainly the way across the Balkan mountains to the Adriatic and then back across Greece from Dodona to Euboea seems fantastically complicated. Seltman tried to explain it on the hypothesis that it had to be adopted after the disturbance caused by the Persian conquest of the Hellespontine region and Dareius' expedition into Scythia in 516 B.C. But except at the time of campaign the military events are not likely to have had such a disturbing effect. Seltman's even wilder efforts to explain the route described by Pausanias involve comparisons between the coin-types of Olbia and Istros with that of Sinope in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.

Seltman's theory was dealt with effectively by R. L. Beaumont in 1936. Apart from emphasizing the improbability of Seltman's routes from a geographical point of view, he stressed the fact that Herodotus described the Dodonaeans as 'the first of the Greeks' to receive the offerings and pointed out that it was hard to reconcile this statement (repeated by Callimachus) with any view that they came down the Adriatic coast and then were brought inland to Dodona. For they would then be bound to pass through the territory of Greeks at Apollonia or in the Bay of Valona. Hammond has argued in favour of the existence of a primitive trade route from the Adriatic coast through Epirus, by-passing Corcyra and the Acroceraunian coast. It may well have existed, but Beaumont's objection that Dodona was not the first Greek settlement on the route is still valid. Also it is unlikely that the rest of the journey of the sacred gifts, as described by Herodotus, was really following a recognized trade route. It is evident that the plan underlying the itinerary was determined on religious principles. In the transmission of the gifts from place to place sanctuaries were used as halts. The gifts start (so far as Greek

shrines are concerned) from Dodona and go to what Callimachus describes as 'the holy city' on the Malian Gulf—evidently the temple of Demeter at Anthela. No doubt sanctuaries were found as stopping-places in the other towns named. Again in Pausanias' account it is the sanctuary of Apollo at Prasiae that is the point of departure from Attica. Evidently, however, a temple of Apollo was not the essential requisite. A sanctuary of Zeus or of Demeter could be used instead. But it is perhaps remarkable and significant that the most famous temple of Apollo—that at Delphi—was not visited. In fact the curious route which skirts round the Corinthian Gulf might well be regarded as deliberately chosen so as to avoid Delphi. This suggests that Dodona had a say in the planning of the journey and not surprisingly wished to avoid contact with her great rival. That Delos would acquiesce in this policy in the archaic period need not be taken as peculiar. There is nothing to suggest that Delos and Delphi had any specially friendly relations in this early period. Their close contact seems to date from the Delians' exile in the late fifth century.

As for the origin of the gifts, the possibilities seem to be various. They might have come from some barbarian community north of Dodona whom the Delians chose to describe as Hyperboreans, but most scholars reject this as too fantastically improbable. The simple view that the cult of Apollo originated in northern Europe and came to Greece bringing with it unbroken links from that direction is not likely now to be accepted. Alternatively there could be some variation of Seltman's theory in which the original senders of the gifts are of partly Greek origin. If they knew the Delian Apollo because they were the descendants of Greek colonists or traders, one has to admit some degree of deliberate humbug on the part of the Dodonaean or the Delians or both, who disguise these fellow Hellenes as Hyperboreans and place them beyond the Scythians. Here it is worth noting that Herodotus himself indicates that the Scythians had no traditions of Hyperboreans. Otherwise, if the gifts really went through Scythia, they had some other explanation associated with them. But more likely they never reached Scythia at all.

If we are forced to recognize at least some degree of priestly humbug in the business, it is perhaps easier to suppose that it was on a larger scale. Beaumont has stressed the peculiarity of the statement that the gifts reached the Dodonaean first of the Greeks

and has suggested instead that this was where they originated. The view is not too absurd if we suppose that at some time in the late seventh or sixth century the Apollo cult of Epirus developed friendly relations with Delos. This may have been a by-product of the hostility between the oracles of Dodona and Delphi. That the Dodonaean themselves in the late sixth century were not hostile to Apollo as a deity is shown by the dedication of Etymocledas (Appendix II, p. 275, no. 2). May one suppose then that the link with Delos may have been deliberately fostered at that period by the priests of Zeus who may have acted as a collecting centre for the gifts from Epirus? The Delians chose to regard these offerings from the far north-west as coming from the Hyperboreans—the mythical worshipper of Apollo in that direction—and associated the custom rather awkwardly with the tombs of legendary Hyperboreans on Delos which already received a traditional cult. The difficulty was that they had to gloss over the fact that the Hyperborean gifts were not themselves carried by actual Hyperboreans, such as figured in legend.

In the archaic period when the geography of barbarian lands was vague and mixed with mystical elements, the Hyperboreans could lie beyond Dodona without any need for greater precision in locating them. An echo of this view, as suggested by Beaumont, may survive in the statement repeated in Schol. A. on *Iliad*, 2, 750 and 16, 233 that Dodona was a 'place among the Hyperboreans'. But the development of geographical knowledge pushed the Hyperboreans farther north. Pindar (*Ol.* 3, 26) locates them on the Danube. Aristaeas' narrative would require them to be much farther off, several stages on the other side of the Scythians. Herodotus' account is a rather vague attempt to combine these pieces of evidence. The gifts must reach the Greeks first at Dodona, but they must start in the north-east so as to agree with Aristaeas' location of the Hyperboreans. Therefore they must cross from Scythia to the Adriatic so as to arrive in Epirus.

Presumably the gifts may have come at intervals until the devastation of Epirus by the Romans in the second century B.C. It may have been at that point that Pausanias' version of the route was established, if it ever really existed. Seltman was led to give this evidence high importance on the belief (which would not now be accepted) that the source was Phanodemus, the Attidographer. Pausanias simply quotes it as a tradition. But it might be

that from 166/5 B.C. when the Athenians obtained the control of Delos which they maintained till the sack of the island in 88 B.C., they established a custom of sending Hyperborean gifts from Prasiae. If so, we need not suppose that they ever arrived in Attica from Sinope, while the earlier stages of the route are simply a fictitious transcript of the tribes named by Aristeeas. The Hyperborean gifts, if they came in late periods from Attica, need not have stopped in 88 B.C. For even after that date Athens retained some degree of ritual connection with the largely depopulated island, till the time of the Antonines. But Pliny (*HN*, 4, 91) treats the custom as defunct. However, this development has no connection with Dodona.

This strange ritual custom, then, though not directly connected with the oracular responses of Dodona may be interpreted as illustrating one of the steps in the rivalry between different Greek oracles. Delos, though it probably had once had an oracle, had already abandoned this line of activity by the late archaic period and so was not unwilling to find a partner in Dodona in organizing the transmission of gifts to the Delian Apollo. To the Delians it may have seemed a good opportunity to stress their Hyperborean connections in rivalry with Delphi in whose mythology Hyperboreans also were prominent. The reception of the gifts on Delos was evidently made the occasion of a spectacular festival. Plutarch (*De Musica*, 14) refers to the tradition that they were received with flutes and pipes as well as harps. Dodona on its side may have been glad of links with the centre of Greece.

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INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

The references are to pages of the text

- Abae 186, 201
- Abas 173
- Aborigines, the 64, 147
- Acarmania 137, 155
- Acarmanians, the 151
- Acesines, the 227
- Acestodorus 40
- Achaeans, the 4
- Acheloos 68, 153 ff.
- Acheron, the 7, 97, 143
- Acheros, the 143
- Achilles 1, 7, 8, 10, 38, 39, 50, 62, 154 ff.
- Achoris 197
- Actium, the battle of 124
- Acusilaus 155
- Admetus, king of the Molossi 135
- Aeacus 28, 157
- Aegeira 181
- Aegina 157
- Aegosthena 170
- Aelian 246, 247
- Aemilius Paulus 122
- Aeneas 148, 159, 243
- Aeolia 129
- Aeolids, the 165
- Aepytus 175, 176
- Aequi, the 21, 22, 36
- Aeschines 139
- Aeschylus 13, 27, 31, 50, 51, 112
- Aetna*, the 246
- Actolia 96
- Aetolians, the 66, 120, 146, 151, 254
- Agamemnon 37, 49
- Agathocles 144
- Agasias 175
- Agasilaus 138
- Agisipolis 187, 189
- Aghurmi 197
- Agias 177
- Agis I, king of Sparta 186, 187, 221
- Agnihotris, the 24
- Ahuramazda 160
- Akhenaton 194
- Albania 30
- Alcetas, king of the Molossi 137
- Alcibiades 216, 217
- Alcmaeonidae, the 133, 186
- Aletes 129 ff.
- Alexander of Abonuteichos 107, 108
- Alexander of Epirus 83, 142, 143, 230
- Alexander of Pleuron 9, 24
- Alexander the Great 118, 142, 152, 198, 199, 219, 222 ff., 233 ff., 242, 256
- Alexandria 223
- Alpheus, the 166, 182
- Alytarch, the 25, 164
- Amalthea 234
- Amasis 197
- Amon-Ra 52, 56, 57, 194 ff., 200, 204, 211, 224, 254
- Ammon 54, 57 ff., 67, 80, 81, 129 ff., 134, 137, 194, 196 ff., 242 ff., 254 ff.
- Ammonias, the 218, 219
- Amphiaraus 171, 172, 201, 245, 247
- Amphiareum, the 155, 171
- Amphictyony, the Delphic 14
- Amphilochus 106, 108, 171
- Amphinomus 15
- Amphion, son of Amphiaraus 173
- Amphitrite 227
- Amythaon 165
- Anadodonaean 2
- Andromeda 233, 234
- Andron 8, 9
- Antaeus 234
- Anthela 14
- Antigonos Gonatas 144
- Antioch 25, 104
- Antiochus I 82, 158
- Antipater 143
- Antiphates 172
- Antiphemus 179
- Apheidias 131
- Aphrodite 70, 119

- Aphytis 219, 220
 Apollo 12, 14, 20, 39, 41, 49, 50, 52,
 61, 80 ff., 86, 100, 102, 104, 105, 108,
 112, 114, 129, 134, 135, 137, 147 ff.,
 160, 166, 167, 170, 171, 175, 176, 179,
 188, 201 ff., 209, 254; Hylates 246,
 247
 Apollodorus of Athens 6 ff.
 Apollodorus the Mythographer 61, 166,
 170, 233
 Apollonia 68, 134, 137
 Apollonius of Rhodes 14
 Arabia 152
 Arcadia 21, 138, 150, 175
 Arcesilas IV 206
 Archidamus II 138
 Areus 188
 Argo, the 13 ff., 27, 35, 247, 250
 Argonauts, the 13, 14, 35, 41
 Argos 171, 172; Pelasgian 4
 Aristobulus 220
 Aristophanes 80, 88, 213, 217
 Aristotle 7, 140, 188, 214, 218
 Arrian 226, 227
 Arsinoë, daughter of Phegeus 173
 Artemis 143, 204
 Arces 66, 125
 Asia Minor 24, 70, 129, 134, 155, 156,
 179
 Aspetus 156, 158
 Asteropæus 154
 Astykrates 217
 Athenæus 213
 Athena 12, 13, 35, 133, 150, 188;
 Itonia 144; Lindia 145, 149
 Athenians, the 85, 102 ff., 131, 133,
 135 ff., 142, 143, 149, 213, 215 ff.,
 221, 222, 256
 Athens 70, 155, 212
 Attalus I 158
 Attica 72
 Augila 233
 Augustus 124
 Ausonius 249
 Axius, the 154

 Bacchus 84, 235
 Bahria Oasis, the 198
 Baltic, the 24
 Battus I 243
 Battus IV 204
 Bendis 149, 150
 Bias 167, 168, 171
 Bocchoris (Bokeuranef) 236, 237
 Boeotia 49, 58, 71, 74, 152, 153, 160
 Bostar 248
 Branchidae 201, 225, 247
 Branchus 175
 Buthrotum 148
 Byzacium 251

 Caesar, Julius 25
 Calamis 207
 Calchas 159
 Callimachus 90
 Callippus 216
 Callirhoe 150, 151
 Callisthenes 83, 108, 223, 229, 233, 234
 Calydon 151
 Cambyses 203
 Capitol, the 21
 Carapanos, Constantine 94, 97, 98, 100,
 101, 114, 115, 144, 152
 Carcasan 232, 250, 251
 Caria 24, 25, 129, 179
 Carian mercenaries 213
 Carnos 203
 Carthage 230, 243, 251
 Cassandra 111, 112, 116
 Catalogue of Ships, the 4, 5, 6, 15, 36
 Cato Minor 245, 246
 Catullus 242
 Celaeno 148
 Cephisus, the 156
 Chacronæa, the battle of 142
 Chaones, the 82, 113, 158
 Chares of Mitylene 234
 Chilon 185
 Christian writers 89, 90
 Chunsu 194, 211
 Cicero 129, 144, 145
 Cilicia 106, 171
 Cimon 215
 Cineas 39
 Cinyps 209, 210
 Circe 34
 Cirrha 89
 Cladeos, the 180
 Claros 202
 Claudian 249
 Cleisthenes 133
 Cleitus 173
 Clement of Alexandria 89, 125
 Cleombrotus, king of Sparta 137
 Cleombrotus a Spartan 232
 Cleomenes I 132, 133, 209

- Clodius Gracchus 21
 Clytiads, the 173 ff., 190
 Clytius 173, 174
 Commodus 25
 Codrus 131, 132
 Coiranus 173
 Corcyra 11, 88, 91, 113, 131, 135
 Coresus 150, 151
 Corinth 129 ff., 135, 173
 Corinthos 130
 Corippus 232, 250, 251
 Corope 104, 105, 107, 108
 Coryle 147
 Crates of Mallus 34
 Cratinus 217
 Creon, king of Corinth 130
 Creon, king of Thebes 80, 184
 Crete 20, 34, 70, 173, 234
 Croesus 134, 145, 201, 202
 Cronos 49, 83, 147, 154, 159, 176, 178,
 180, 182, 234
 Croton 156
 Ctesias 236
 Curtius Rufus 200, 223
 Cylon 131, 133
 Cynthus 246
 Cyprus 215, 246
 Cyrene 202 ff., 243, 254
- Dakaris, S. I. 95, 98, 119, 120, 124, 125
 Damophilus 206
 Danube, the 155
 Darius 203
 Deianeira 59, 60, 61, 62
 Deiphonius 134, 135
 Delos 49, 90, 118, 218, 243
 Delphi 15, 58, 64, 65, 76, 80, 81, 83,
 100, 104, 109, 112, 118, 120, 137, 139,
 141, 158, 160, 174, 180, 188, 201, 203,
 204, 209, 216, 218, 231
 Delphic oracle, the 4, 14, 37, 39, 40,
 48, 49, 51, 61, 80, 84, 85, 110, 114,
 124, 130, 133 ff., 139, 144, 146, 148 ff.,
 159, 176, 177, 181, 185, 187, 188, 195,
 201, 202, 210, 218, 221, 222, 225,
 244 ff., 255
 Demaratus 188, 189
 Demeter 14, 152, 153, 160, 180;
 Chamyne 181
 Demetrias 104
 Demetrius Poliorcetes 82, 158, 229
 Demon 86, 87, 89 ff., 116
 Demosthenes 84, 85, 139 ff., 218
- Demoteles 138
 Deucalion 40, 41, 174, 255
 Dido 243
 Didyma 155, 175, 182
 Dieuchidas 165
 Dinarchus 140, 141, 219
 Dio Cassius 145
 Dio Chrysostom 232
 Diodorus Siculus 61, 200, 230, 234
 Diomedes 70
 Dion 216
 Dione 69 ff., 85, 86, 118 ff., 123, 140,
 142, 149, 160
 Dionysia, the 84, 139
 Dionysius of Halicarnassus 64, 146 ff.
 Dionysius I of Syracuse 138
 Dionysius Scytobrachion 235
 Dionysus 52, 84, 149 ff., 171, 234, 235;
 Calydonian 150, 151
 Dis 147
 Dium 120
 Dodon 151
 Dorieus 209, 210
 Dorimachus 120
 Dorippe 165
 Dryopes, the 244
 Duris of Samos 130
- Ecbatana 229
 Echo 89
 Egyptians, the 52, 75, 236
 Eleusis 102, 152
 Elis 156, 165, 173, 175, 186, 187, 211,
 232
 Eniemes, the 5
 Enipeus, the 250
 Ennius 144, 145
 Eperastos 174
 Ephorus 71, 73, 74, 138, 153, 154, 221
 Ephyre 7, 8
 Epicureans, the 106
 Epidaurus 119
 Epidius, Caius 21
 Epigoni, the 153, 173
 Eratosthenes 205
 Erechtheus 73, 84
 Etearchus 205
 Ethiopia 152, 200, 233
 Etruria 24
 Etruscans, the 146
 Etymocledas 246
 Eubotas 212

- Euesperidae 202
 Euhemerus 235
 Eumaeus 11
 Eumenides, the 131, 133
 Euripides 58, 72, 80, 112, 212, 247
 Europus, the 5
 Eurotas, the 175, 176
 Euxenippus 142
 Evadne 175, 176
 Evangelides, Demetrios 94 ff., 98 ff.
 Evenius 134, 135

 Flamen Dialis, the 23, 24
 Frazer, Sir James 22 ff., 91, 169, 170
 Fortune 111

 Gaia 160
 Galeotae, the 129, 178 ff.
 Galeotes 179
 Garamantes, the 243
 Ge 180
 Gela 179
 Gellius, Aulus 23
 Glaucus, son of Minos 173
 Gouneus 5, 6
 Great Oasis, the 196, 203
 Gryneum 202
 Guenfan 232
 Gytheion 210

 Hadrian 124
 Halys, the 145
 Hannibal 230, 231, 248
 Hebe 66
 Hecataeus 51
 Hector 1
 Helenus 148, 166, 243
 Heliodorus 231
 Hellanicus 41, 146, 213
 Hellenes, the 8, 53
 Helloi, the 7, 8, 9, 35, 38, 46, 58
 Hellopia 7, 46, 47
 Hellos 7, 35, 37, 38, 40, 42
 Hephaestion 229, 230
 Hera 151, 164, 171, 181 ff; Ammonia 211
 Heracles 57, 60, 61, 119, 147, 176, 182, 183, 223, 233, 234
 Heraclides 72, 184, 185
 Heraclids, the 129, 131, 167
 Heraclitus 81
 Hermes 49; Parammon 211, 212, 255
 Herodotus 52, 58 ff., 63, 69, 70, 74 ff., 80, 81, 83, 117, 132, 134, 158, 160, 185, 199, 205, 207 ff., 213, 224, 231, 236, 248, 253
 Hesiod 7, 36, 41, 46, 47, 49, 50, 53, 155, 165, 167, 200, 242
 Hesione 233
 Hesychius 66
 Hipparchus the astronomer 205
 Hippias 132
 Hippocrates, father of Peisistratus 185
 Homer 1, 7, 10, 16, 27, 34, 37, 43, 46, 53, 63, 69, 70, 73, 75, 99, 115, 146, 154 ff., 165, 168, 171 ff., 200, 225, 242, 244, 253
 Honorius 250
 Horus 52
 Hosioi, the 41, 174
 Hyades, the 151, 152
 Hydaspes, the 227
 Hyes 152
 Hyla 246
 Hyllos 60
 Hyperides 142

 Iamids, the 174
 Iamus 176, 177, 183
 Iarbas 243
 Ida, Mt. (the Cretan) 34; (the Trojan) 3
 Idmon 14, 15
 Inachus 51
 Inaros 215
 India 24, 228
 Indus, the 227
 Ino 151
 Io 51
 Iole 60
 Ionia 100
 Iphiclus 168, 169
 Iris 49
 Ishtar 236
 Italy 9, 21, 26, 64, 111, 129, 143, 146, 156
 Ithaca 11, 15

 Jannina 2
 Jehovah 160, 237
 Jews, the 236
 John, brother of Pappus 232, 250
 Juppiter 21, 22, 28, 66, 147, 235, 243, 251
 Justinian 232, 233
 Juvenal 249

- Kabeiron, the 153
 Kabeiroi, the 153
 Kalbaki 98
 Kilindir 98
 Kyphos 5

 Labienus 246
 Lacedaemonians, the 131
 Laciis 179
 Lamia, the 232
 Lanassa 144
 Larissa 3
 Laurentum 148
 Lebadeia 232
 Lemnos 72
 Leonidas II 188, 189
 Lesbia 243
 Leto 213
 Leucas 96
 Leuctra, the battle of 83, 137
 Libya 53, 54, 67, 85, 152
 Libyans, the 214
 Libys 210, 219
 Livia Augusta 124
 Livy 21, 22, 36, 143
 Locris 41
 Lucan 90, 244, 245, 248
 Lucania 143
 Lucian 107, 108
 Lucilius 189, 190, 249
 Lucius of Tarrha 88
 Lucretius 67
 Lycia 123, 179, 212
 Lycoreia 40
 Lydia 134
 Lysander 137, 210, 219 ff.
 Lysandros the ephor 188, 189

 Macedon 96, 120, 122, 143, 144
 Macrobius 147
 Magnesia 5
 Majorian 250
 Malalas 25
 Mallius, Lucius 146
 Mallus 106 ff.
 Mantinea, the second battle of 178
 Mantius 172
 Marcus Aurelius 107
 Mardylas 36 ff., 40, 42
 Marea 214
 Marmarides, the 250
 Mars 64

 Mauri, the 232, 233, 250, 251
 Megara 156
 Meidias 84, 139
 Mela 67
 Melas 150
 Melampus 43, 165 ff.
 Memphis 229
 Menander 86, 89
 Menecles 189
 Menedemus the priest 122
 Messenia 167, 171
 Metsovo pass, the 6, 36, 80
 Minerva 250
 Minos 173
 Mithridates Eupator 122
 Moero 34
 Molossi, the 11, 38, 51, 58, 62, 65, 83,
 109, 113, 135, 137, 142, 143
 Mons Algidus, the 21
 Mopsus the Argonaut 14, 15, 43
 Mopsus, the Cilician prophet 106
 Munychia 143
 Mut 194, 211
 Mycenae 24, 97, 99
 Myconus 156
 Myrmidons 1, 28
 Myrtila the prophetess 72
 Myrtille, a nurse 86

 Naia, the 119, 121, 122, 124, 125
 Napata 196, 197
 Naucratis 220, 254
 Nearchus 231
 Neleus 167, 169
 Neoptolemus 58, 144
 Nereids, the 227
 Nicandre 54
 Nicomedeia 230, 231
 Nicopolis 124
 Nile, the 155, 231
 Nymphs, the 26, 27, 155, 243
 Nysa 151, 234

 Ocean 34, 154, 155, 227
 Odysseus 11, 27, 34, 49, 63, 99
 Olympia 25, 26, 160, 164, 173 ff., 211,
 212, 242, 253 ff.
 Olympias 142, 226 ff.
 Olympic games, the 141, 181, 186
 Olympus, Mt. 5, 27
 Olympus the prophet 189, 249
 Onesimus 189

- Onomarchus 104
 Orestes 80
 Oricum 113
 Ornytus 150
 Oropus 171
 Orthys, Mt. 41
 Osiris 52
 Ovid 28, 41, 233, 244

 Pan 155, 247
 Panactum 72
 Pandion 84
 Pandosia 122, 143
 Panthus 244
 Paraetionium 196, 224
 Parga 97
 Parnassus, Mt. 40, 76
 Patara 213, 247
 Patrae 150
 Patroclus 1, 157
 Pausanias, king of Sparta 221
 Pausanias the periegete 82, 125, 131,
 133, 150 ff., 155, 158, 159, 174, 178,
 180, 182, 183, 207, 210, 211, 232, 255
 Pelarge 153
 Pelasgia 29, 54
 Pelasgian 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 38, 50, 53, 71,
 72, 90, 146, 147
 Pelasgiotis 4
 Pelcia 82
 Peleiadcs, the 60, 62, 63, 66, 160
 Pelias 68
 Pelion, Mt. 156
 Penceios, the 5, 6
 Penelope 15
 Perdiccas the chiliarch 229
 Pergamum 182
 Pero 167, 168
 Perrhaebians, the 5, 6
 Persia 135
 Perseus, king of Macedon 122
 Perseus, the hero 223, 233
 Phaedrus 81, 155
 Phaennis 82, 158
 Phaethon 234
 Phaselis 179
 Phegeus 173
 'Phegonaie' 2, 38, 40
 Phemonoe 82, 158
 Pherecrates 137
 Pherecydes 151, 152
 Philip II 141
 Philip V 120, 121

 Philistus 152
 Philocrates, the peace of 141
 Philostratus the elder 156, 157
 Philostratus the younger 28, 29, 35, 89
 Phineus 35
 Phocis 137, 139, 202
 Phoenice 122
 Phoenicians, the 54, 55
 Phormio 136
 Phrixa 176
 Phylacus 167 ff.
 Pindar 7, 27, 36, 41, 50, 52, 58, 59, 63,
 175, 177, 178, 183, 184, 186, 202,
 206 ff., 230, 232, 234, 242, 254
 Piraeus, the 143, 149, 217, 219
 Pisatis 175, 176
 Pisistratus 133, 185 f.
 Pitane 175, 176
 Planctae, the 34, 35
 Plataea, the battle of 176
 Plato 81, 83, 149, 204
 Pleistos, the 40
 Pliny the elder 21, 67
 Plutarch 76, 106, 114, 135, 136, 156,
 188, 209, 215, 216, 220, 231, 232
 Polemon 87, 88
 Polyaeus 213
 Polybius 120
 Polyidos 172, 173
 Polyphcides 172
 Polyphontes 167
 Pompeius, Sextus 244, 245
 Pompey 244
 Poseidon 175, 176, 227
 Potneus 153
 Potniae 152, 153
 Potrimro 23
 Praeneste 111
 Priam 111
 Priapus 152
 Proclus 72
 Procopius 233
 Proitus 171
 Promeneia 54
 Prometheus 51
 Propertius 243
 Proxenus 36 ff.
 Prusias I 230
 Prussians, the pagan 22 ff., 26
 Psammctichus I 200, 213, 214
 Psophis 173
 Ptolemy I 207, 229, 230
 Pylos 166, 167

- Pyrrha 40, 42
 Pyrrhus, king 37, 115, 118, 120, 144 ff.,
 160, 179, 250, 254
 Pythia, the 4, 14, 29, 41, 49, 50, 76,
 81 ff., 103, 104, 110, 114, 117, 130,
 131, 137, 145, 158, 159, 174, 201,
 206 ff., 218, 221, 251, 257, 258
 Pythian games, the 141
 Pythii, the 187
 Pytho 129

 Ra 194
 Reate 64
 Red Sea, the 232
 Rhea 234
 Rhodes 145, 155, 229, 230
 Romans, the 21, 22, 36, 122, 123,
 144 ff., 230, 242, 250
 Rome 23, 146
 Romulus 21

 Samos 182
 Sarapis 231
 Sarpedon 12
 Saturn 147, 189
 Saturnalia, the 147
 Saturnian land, the 147
 Scaean gate, the 12
 Sciathos 109
 Scotussa 5, 38
 Sellocis, the 7, 8
 Selloi, the 1, 7 ff., 12, 23, 26, 31, 35,
 42, 46, 47, 55, 58, 60, 62, 69, 73, 75,
 115, 160, 164, 165, 170, 174, 244, 253
 Sellos 36
 Semiramis 236
 Seneca 247
 Servilius Vatia Isauricus, Publius 123
 Servius 66, 68, 148, 235
 Sihyl, the 81 ff., 148, 158, 159, 243, 248,
 251
 Sicels, the 147, 178
 Sicily 129, 136, 137, 155, 178, 179, 209
 Sicyon 173
 Sidonius Apollinaris 250
 Silius Italicus 248, 249
 Sitalces 149
 Siwa, the oasis of 194, 196 ff.
 Socrates, 155, 221
 Solinus 67
 Sophocles 7, 46, 50, 58, 59, 66, 69, 80,
 184, 247
 Soteriades, G. 94, 115

 Sparta 176, 210
 Spartans, the 83, 84, 108, 109, 131, 137,
 138, 176, 177, 186 ff., 209, 210, 213, 219
 Spercheios, the, 4, 5, 157
 Spolia Opimia, the 21
 Statius 247, 248
 Stella, Erasmus 22, 23
 Stephanus of Byzantium 88
 Stilicho 250
 Strabo 5, 15, 16, 39, 46, 62, 65, 66, 69,
 70, 75, 85, 87, 88, 124, 143, 183, 205,
 231
 Strato 204
 Strophades, the 148
 Suda, the 29
 Sulla 220
 Sutekhirides 198
 Syene 231
 Symmachus 249
 Symplegades, the 35, 247
 Syracuse 216
 Syrtis, the 209

 Tarentum 113, 144
 Tcharacovitsa 2, 94, 97
 Tearless battle, the 138
 Tegea 188
 Telegonus 63, 64
 Telemachus 15, 63
 Telesicrates 206
 Telondes 153
 Telmessans, the 129, 179
 Tementhos 213
 Tempe 5
 Tethys 155
 Teuthis 150
 Theagenes 156
 Thebes, Boeotian 58, 72 ff., 80, 151 ff.,
 207, 213
 Thebes, Egyptian 53 ff., 59, 64, 65, 81,
 194 ff., 203, 207, 211, 236, 248, 254
 Themis 40, 41, 180, 250, 255
 Themisto 179
 Themistocles 135
 Theoclymenus 172
 Theodorus of Cyrene 204
 Theophrastus 30
 Thera 202, 207, 209, 210
 Thermon 96, 121
 Thermopylae 4, 7
 Theseus 131, 218
 Thesmophoria, the 152, 153
 Thesprotia 11, 54, 89, 125, 143

- Thesprotians, the 12, 29, 52
 Thessalos 7, 36
 Thessaly 2, 5, 7, 11, 14, 36, 37, 39, 40,
 71, 80, 96, 99, 104, 124, 144, 146,
 155 ff., 170
 Thracians, the 122, 125, 149
 Thrasyboulus 40
 Thrasyboulus the Iamid 178, 179
 Thriai, the 50
 Thucydides 135, 215, 216
 Thymbra 247
 Tiber, the 148
 Tibullus 244
 Timarete 54
 Tiora Matiene 64
 Tiresias 184
 Tisamenus 177
 Titaessos, the 5, 14
 Tomaros, Mt. 3, 8, 15, 41, 97
 Tomouroi, the 15, 16
 Tralles 24
 Triphylia 175
 Tripodophoria, the 72, 74, 152
 Triton, the river 234
 Troglodytes, the 232
 Trojans, the 148, 233
 Trophonius 201, 232
 Troy 12, 20, 111, 156, 234
 Tyre 57
 Tyro 169
 Tyrrhenians, the 9, 24
 Umbria 147
 Ummabida 199
 Valerius Flaccus 14, 233
 Valerius Maximus 245
 Valonia 30
 Vardar valley, the 98
 Varro 147, 148
 Veda, the 24
 Venus 66
 Vergil 148, 159, 243, 248
 Well of the Sun, the 199, 234, 245
 Wordsworth, Christopher 94
 Xenophon 138, 139, 186
 Xerxes 157, 186, 203
 Zabios 179
 Zeniketes 123, 124
 Zenobius 71, 73
 Zenodotus 2, 4, 38
 Zeus Apomyios 182; Ktesios 86, 149;
 Larasios 25; Lycaios 21; Naios 68,
 70, 85, 119, 123, 144; Panomphaios
 200